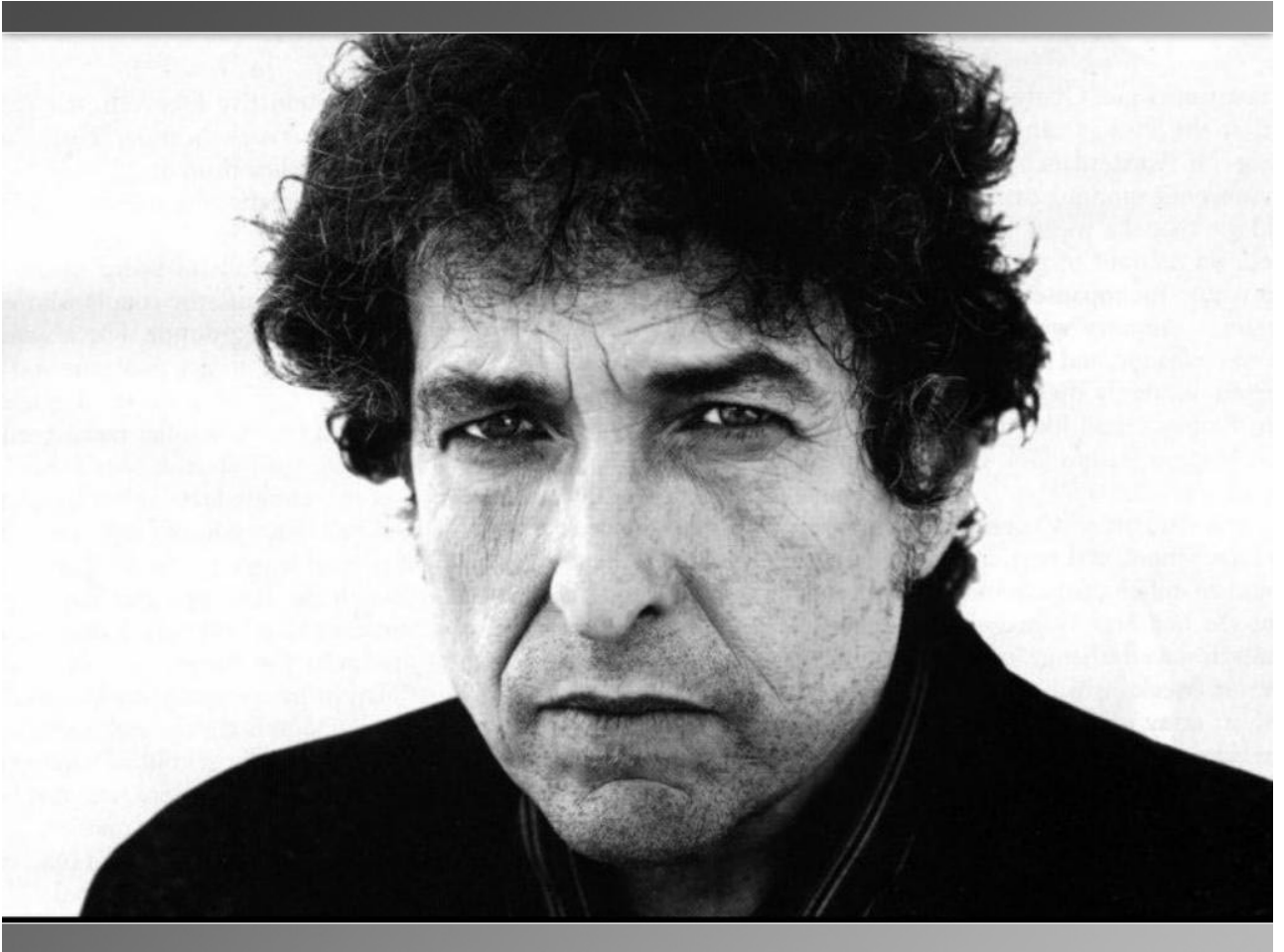


# Bob Dylan at 70—*How does it feel?*

Scott Paton



Yikes! Bob Dylan is 70 today. That skinny, freewheelin' kid with the funny voice and the unkempt white man's 'Fro, peering out from a dozen early album covers with that indirect, but knowing gaze. The guy who made you feel like maybe you *should* have paid more attention in English Lit class. It certainly paid off for him.

There was a time when it seemed like every album had at least one Dylan cover on it if, in fact, it wasn't an entire 12-song homage to the guy. Okay, the Beatles never covered him, but John did a pretty good impression on "You've Got to Hide Your Love Away." And the second that George shook off the mop-tops, he recorded "If Not For You." Even the Stones, in their near-dotage, succumbed to the obvious and cut "Like a Rolling Stone."

“Blowin’ In the Wind,” “Mr. Tambourine Man,” “It Ain’t Me, Babe,” “All Along The Watchtower,” “Don’t Think Twice, It’s All Right”—any one of those songs, or a few dozen others from the Dylan canon, would qualify as any other act’s crowning achievement. And Bob’s got a million of ‘em. But if he’s playing a gig somewhere tonight, do you think he’ll be doing “Forever Young?”

70, somehow, sounds daunting. Especially for one of our *second*-generation Rock & Roll heroes. We’d just gotten used to the founding fathers rolling the odometer over and, certainly, we’re very fortunate to have cats like Fats Domino, Chuck Berry and Little Richard still here among us. But Bob and the Fab Four and the Stones were part of that buffer generation between us and those early rockers who, as much as it defies belief, are actually as old or older than our parents. The Rock Stars 2.0 were like our big brothers or the cool older kids on the block.



Of course, being aghast at someone else’s advancing age is simply a function of resisting our own creeping years, albeit in big, big denial mode. But as I think about it, as much as Dylan pointed the way for us in the midst of one of our most tumultuous cultural eras, he may be just the guy to lead us into that scary netherworld of senior citizenship. The evidence shows that Bob is still at the top of the game.

Let’s just look at his past decade—a point in most lives when we mere mortals are either about to tap into our retirement portfolios or apply for food stamps. Bob’s career is on fire! In just ten years’ time, he’s written a best-selling memoir, “Chronicles, Volume One,” been the subject of a Martin Scorsese-directed documentary, issued numerous collections of prime, unreleased material from the vaults and, most importantly, produced three albums of critically-acclaimed new material. I haven’t even finished raking up last fall’s leaves from my yard!

Ten out of ten critics agree—Bob Dylan’s been enjoying a creative renaissance, coupled with tasteful exploitations of his celebrated past. Isn’t that what we all hope for? The opportunity to still achieve something meaningful while occasionally recalling and burnishing our glory days? We’ll be watching you, Bob.