

## Bob Dylan's Nobel Prize

### Text A

"Our songs are alive in the land of the living. But songs are unlike literature. They're meant to be sung, not read. The words in Shakespeare's plays were meant to be acted on the stage. Just as lyrics in songs are meant to be sung, not read on a page. And I hope some of you get the chance to listen to these lyrics the way they were intended to be heard: in concert or on record or however people are listening to songs these days. I return once again to Homer, who says, "Sing in me, on Muse, and through me tell the story."

Bob Dylan, about receiving the Nobel Prize in Literature, 5 June 2017

### Text B

*Here comes the story of the Hurricane  
The man the authorities came to blame  
For somethin' that he never done  
Put in a prison cell, but one time he could-a been  
The champion of the world*

© Bob Dylan, *The Hurricane*, 1976

Rubin "Hurricane" Carter was a top middleweight boxing contender after he knocked out 11 of his first 15 professional opponents. But Carter was locked up for 19 years after he was convicted (wrongly) of a triple murder. Dylan's song (co-written with Jacques Levy) helped galvanize public support to his case, and eventually a federal judge ruled in 1985 that Carter didn't receive a fair trial and released him.

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- A. Read text A. What does Bob Dylan say about songs in his lecture?
- B. Do you think he sees them as worthy of receiving the Nobel Prize in Literature?
- C. Read text B. Say why songs carry a power of their own.
- D. How would you define this type of song? Do you know others?
- E. **Have your say.** Was the Nobel Foundation right when they granted the Prize in Literature to Bob Dylan? Justify.

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