

## THE WINDS OF SEPTEMBER

By John F. Hall

A friend wanted to know where I received the ideas for my stories. That is a great question. Actually, the ideas, sometimes, come out of nowhere. For example, I came home from church, this past Sunday, and as I changing clothes, four words came to mind: "blowing in the wind." I knew they were words from a song, but I was not certain of the title of that song. Bob Dylan wrote an old song called, "Blowin' in the Wind." I don't know why those words came to mind when I sometimes don't remember what I wrote last week.



These are Bob Dylan's lyrics: "How many roads must a man walk down before they call him a man? How many seas must a white dove sail before she sleeps in the sand? How many times must the cannonballs fly before they are forever banned? The answer, my friend, is blowing in the wind, the answer is blowing in the wind. How many years must a mountain exist before it is washed to the sea? How many years can some people exist before they are allowed to be free? How many times can a man turn his head and pretend that he just doesn't see? The answer, my friend, is blowing in the wind. The answer is blowing in the wind. How many times must a man look up before he can see the sky? How many ears must one man have before he can hear people cry? How many deaths will it take 'til he knows that too many people have died? The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind. The answer is blowing in the wind."

I feel that Bob Dylan is a greater song writer than he is a singer. Peter, Paul and Mary made Dylan's song, Blowin' in the Wind, an enormous number 1 hit in August of 1963. The sales of the 45 RPM records of that song gave Bob Dylan a significant amount of royalties. I was a teenage infantry soldier of 18, that year. Because I was an M-60 machine gunner in B Company, 327th Infantry, 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division, I was not issued an M-1 rifle. I was issued a .45 caliber handgun and holster. This freed up my two ammo pouches. I put a small transistor radio in one pouch and a small paperback book in the other pouch. The transistor radio came with an ear phone. I would let my assistant gunner and my ammo bearer sleep at night, when we were out in the field on training exercises on Fort Campbell. I would listen to music, that no one else could hear, all during the night.

As for the paperback book. I never got to read it. Our platoon was put in a reserve status and issued sleeping bags. I found a cedar tree that had been hit by lightning. It was nearly cut in half and it made for a convenient lean-to. I got under the tree and sat on my sleeping bag. My boots were too muddy, anyway. The fine rain turned into snow and several inches fell that night. In the morning, the soldiers who had taken off their muddy boots found them full of snow.

I always kept a small can of gun oil for my machine gun. I gathered up broken branches. I ripped apart the paperback book. I put it on the ground and put the tree branches on top of

the paper in the form of a small Indian tee-pee. I poured the gun oil over the tree branches. I borrowed a cigarette lighter and lit the small bonfire. The words on the paperback book went up in flames. And my fellow "Band of Brothers" were able to dry out their jump boots. Songs and music have always been a part of my life. I had a small record player and 45 RPM records when I was in the 101<sup>st</sup>. My first trip to Hopkinsville in 1962 was to find a store that sold used 45 RPM records. Song melodies bring back memories of the faces, the places, and the times of what I have experienced and observed.

Bob Dylan's song lyrics always impressed me. In 2016, he was given the Nobel Prize for literature. The Award stated: "For having created new poetic expressions within the great American song tradition. Dylan first delayed and finally accepted the Award. He said: "Songs are unlike literature, they're meant to be song, not read." He quoted a line from the Odyssey (an epic poem written by the ancient Greek poet Homer): "Sing in me, Muse, and through me tell the story." I took my first college course, at night, in 1964. It was a literature course and I was in up to my neck. I never studied so hard. I read a lot of things written by F. Scott Fitzgerald. I really thought that I failed the course. I was the last student to finish the exam. As I was going out of the classroom, the professor said: "John! Don't give up!" I stopped in the doorway and said: "I won't." I received a "C" for the course. I never took a college writing or journalism course. It is as if Christ just gave me the talent and said: "Write!"

One reason why I put song lyrics in my stories is because they help with the flow of my story. In 1993, my 16 year old nephew, Dale Garner was killed in a car accident with six other Trigg County High School students. I remember a few years before that happened. We were standing in my front yard and looking down Dyers Hill Road. Dale was worried because his parents, Marsha and Roger Garner were late coming home from work. I told Dale that they may have been delayed by traffic. We stood there in silence. Then he saw their car coming up the road, he got a smile on his face and he ran to their mobile home located next to my house. At his graveside service, I read a short eulogy. I quoted John, Chapter 3, Verse 8: "The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the spirit."

The cool morning winds of September caress my face, as I sit on my front porch swing and draft one of my stories. The sounds of the small birds, waking up in their nests, breaks the morning silence. David Zaffiro wrote the song, "Winds of September."

These are a few of David Zaffiro's of his lyrics: "So I started picking up the pieces, but I don't know just how or where to begin. So I heaved a sigh, and I tried but I just couldn't put me back together again. I finally cried for Jesus. And he came upon the whispering wind. He calmed the clamoring seas that raged and roared in me, and truly loved me when I needed a friend...".

I miss looking at the sea and having the sea winds caress my face. As a young boy, I remember sitting under a coconut tree on the soft sands of Miami Beach. I had to sit in the shade of that tree because the sun burns my fair, white skins so easily. I watched as

the large ships slowly made their way south. I never imagined that one day I would be on a large ship in the East China Sea. And for over one hour, I would be steering that ship as the Captain was down in the galley drinking coffee. Now, I relate to the winds of September in Kentucky. My foot prints are here. They are found in the lives of the people that call me An-Father and Mr. John, and those that I have written about.

When the burdens of my life get too great for me, I ask Christ to ease and level my load. He is the soul of my soul. He owns me. If he should take away my talent to write, I'm not sure what I will do. Until that could happen, I'll continue to do my best to write stories that praise His name. Christ created and owns the winds. He is our breath of life. I can't control the winds of September, but I can still write stories about them.

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\*Read other stories by John F. Hall at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>