

of the artist as a young man



Above and below right: Dylan at John Cohen's farm in upstate New York. Below left: Dylan in the street near his home in Greenwich Village, New York City

John Cohen

I first met Bob when he first came to New York in 1961, in one of the coffee houses near where he lived in Greenwich Village. I had first seen him a week earlier, playing at the Cafe Wha. I thought he was good, and the guy he was singing with was even more interesting. The following year I made a lot of photographs of Bob in black and white. There's a fussiness one of him puffing a cigarette with a very anguished expression. I was seeing Woody Guthrie, of course, and Charlie Chaplin, because Bob was a very funny guy, but I was also seeing James Dean: there was an anguished, teenage look about him.

The street picture here was one of several I took for *Self Portrait* in 1970. Bob called me and said, "Hey, John, I need some more pictures. Come to the city, but bring a beeperbait lens." I think what he was trying to prove to himself was that he could walk through the streets without being recognized. I went to his house on McDougal Street and took pictures of him on the street, but I was always a block away: there was no camera on top of him, no occasion and nobody noticed him. The two rural shots were taken a



week later at my farm in upstate New York. He drove up and we had a couple of hours together. He was more self-contained than when I'd first met him, but he was always open to the shots that I suggested. Other times he'd come to my place, play my guitar and we'd talk about music. Here's a guy who's been on the big stages and he comes here and he's suddenly just laidback and in the country.

Some of the pictures showed up on *Self Portrait*, but they never gave the rest back for 40 years. It's wonderful seeing them, such a surprise.

I've been in touch with Bob several times since — not often, because he's on tour so much. He's become so famous but I wanted to remember him as the person in those first photographs. In the notes to his *Another Self Portrait* (1969-1971) released today by Columbia Records

The photos on these pages feature on the artwork of *The Bootleg Series, Vol. 10 — Another Self Portrait* (1969-1971) released today by Columbia Records

and he came over to my loft in New York and I showed him some books.

I last spoke to him about five years ago — he was playing near me in a little baseball stadium. We talked family — how many grandkids? He said he had 16 or 17. I had taken one of his old girlfriends, Suzie Rotolo [who was pictured with Dylan on the cover of his *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan* album from 1963] and died in February 2001] to a previous concert. I told him and he said, "Oh, I'd wish I had known, I would've changed my set list."

