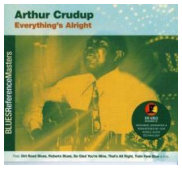
Arthur Crudup – Everything's Alright (2002)



1. Hey Mama, Everything's All Right 2. Ethel Mae 3. You Got to Recap 4. That's All Right 5. Train Fare Blues 6. Katie May play 7. So Glad You're Mine 8. Crudup's After Hours play 9. Crudup Vicksburg Blues 10. Just Like a Spider 11. Roberta Blues 12. That's Why I'm Lonesome 13. Dirt Road Blues 14. I Don't Know It 15. Chicago Blues 16. I Want My Lovin'
Personnel : Arthur 'Big Boy' Crudup : vocals, guitar

Arthur Crudup was born on August 24, 1905 in Forest, Mississippi. His father was a farmhand/musician and Arthur, by the age of ten, was singing in church choirs and Gospel quartets. Arthur was large, even as a child, and acquired his nickname early in life. For most of his early life he worked on the farm or as a labourer in lumber and levee camps. In 1940 he travelled to Chicago as a member of the Harmonizing Four – a Gospel quartet. After breaking with the group Crudup sang on street corners for change and lived in a wooden crate. His music came to the attention of Lester Melrose, a Blues producer who got him a recording contract on (RCA)Victor's Bluebird label. He made his first recording with Bluebird in 1941, at the age of 36. His guitar technique was primitive, using only a few basic chords, but it was enough to express his simple but plaintive songs.

Crudup continued to record on the Bluebird label until 1952, but ended his relationship with Melrose in 1947 over royalty disputes. Despite his records selling well in the south, lack of income from his songs forced Crudup to keep returning to the labour camps after each recording date. He knew his Blues classics like "Rock Me Mama," "Mean Old Frisco," and "My Baby Left Me" were earning royalties because they were being performed by the likes of B.B. King, Big Mama Thornton and Bobby "Blue" Bland. "I was making everybody rich," Crudup complained, "and here I am poor!" Over the next two years he recorded on different labels under different names before calling it quits in 1954.

Then in the summer of 1954 Elvis Presley released a version of Crudup's "That's All Right." Seeing the commercial success of his song, Crudup again pursued Melrose for royalties, but with no result. With the advent of Rock & Roll, Crudup's songs were further popularized by Elton John, Rod Stewart, Johnny Winter, Paul Butterfield, Tina Turner, Buffy Sainte-Marie, Canned Heat and Creedence Clearwater Revival. The resurgence of his material offered Crudup some overdue recognition, but no royalties. In 1971 Crudup filed a lawsuit for royalties owing. A figure of $60,000 was agreed upon and a cheque drafted, but the publishers refused to sign. Crudup received nothing. That same year RCA released an album of Crudup's recordings entitled "Father of Rock and Roll." Three years later, at the age of 69, Arthur Crudup was dead. He died on March 28, 1974 in Nassawadox,Virginia, a poor man. --- onlinerootsofrock.com

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