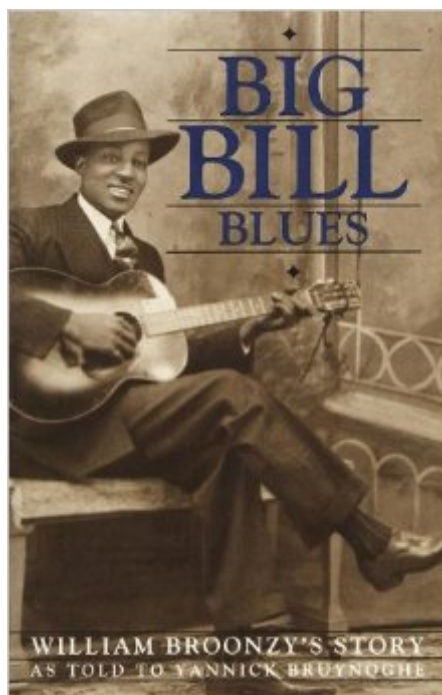


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# Big Bill Blues: William Broonzy's Story



## Synopsis

Big Bill Broonzy (1893-1958) was one of the masters of the country blues. His vocal style was legendary long before his death, and his songs, including "Big Bill Blues", "Keys to the Highway", and "Looking Up at Down", are some of the best known in the blues repertoire. His 1955 autobiography, "Big Bill Blues", was the first - and only - book ever written by a country blues musician. It captures the full flavour of Broonzy's unique voice as he tells about his thirty years of playing the blues. Here are intimate stories about other blues greats - Sleepy John Estes, Lonnie Johnson, Sonny Boy Williamson, Memphis Slim; Memphis Minnie, Washboard Sam - and descriptions of how he came up with the ideas for his songs.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (3 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

Big Bill Blues is a wonderful, folksy autobiography by one of the top blues musicians of the 20th century. Bill was poorly educated but he has a wonderful sense of irony (especially about race relations) & self-deprecating humor that come out in both his songs and his book, which covers growing up black in the Jim Crow South, trying to make it as a blues musician, & recalling good times with his friends. A very quick and fun read. Skip the introduction, though--it's a bunch of academic observations by some egghead. Bill's story is much richer and more compelling.

This book, the autobiography of bluesman Bill Broonzy as told to a British fan/writer, is a favorite among a cross section of blues lovers and book collectors ... Broonzy was a key figure in the birth of

the blues (and therefore rock, country, hip hop etc), but most people have never heard of him. This book is very colorful. It gives a good idea of what life was like in his day, the first half of last century. It reminds me of *Adventures of Huck Finn* by Mark Twain (which is obviously about a different era) and *The Glory of Their Times* by Lawrence Ritter. Also, *You Know Me, Al* by Ring Lardner. (I guess I'm implying that one can learn about the history of our culture by reading about blues and baseball). Read this book if you liked *O, Brother Where Art Thou?* (the movie. I hope enough people read, buy this book so that someone will put out a new edition. Maybe with a disc of his recordings (are you listening, Rhino Records)?

The narrative is a hoot and sounds just like the man! I'm glad Studs Terkle wasn't involved cause Broonzy wouldn't have been himself or spoken in the same vernacular.

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