

Cry Like a Baby

(The Box Tops)

When I think about the good
love you gave me
I cry like a baby
Living without you is driving
me crazy
I cry like a baby
Well, I know now that you're not
a play thing
Not a toy, or a puppet on a string

As I look back on a love so
sweet now
I cry like a baby
Every road is a lonely street
I cry like a baby
I know now that you're not a
play thing
Not a toy, or a puppet on a string

Today we passed on a street
And you just walked on by
My heart just fell to my feet

And once again I began to cry

When I think about the good
love you gave me
I cry like a baby
Living without you is driving
me crazy
I cry like a baby

I know now that you're not a
play thing

I cry like a baby
As I look back on a love so
sweet now
I cry like a baby
Every road is a lonely street
I cry like a baby
My heart just fell to my feet,
you know
I cried like a baby
You left the water running now
I cried like a baby

"Cry Like a Baby" is a 1968 song written by Dan Penn and Spooner Oldham, and performed by The Box Tops. The song reached #2 in April 1968 on the Billboard Hot 100 chart, a position which it held for two weeks. It was kept out of the top spot by Bobby Goldsboro's "Honey", which stayed at #1 for five weeks. "Cry Like a Baby" also reached #2 on Cashbox for one week. It stayed on the Hot 100 for 15 weeks and Cashbox for 14 weeks. It was awarded a gold disc for selling over one million copies in the United States.

Spooner Oldham explained in an interview how the song came to be:

Dan Penn was producing The Box Tops, he had produced a #1 record called "The Letter". He recorded that in Memphis when he and I were both living there. So he calls me one day and says, "Spooner, will you help me try to write a song for Alex (Chilton) and the Box Tops?" He says, "People have sent me some songs, but I don't think any of them really fit. This record company's been after me about three weeks for a follow-up single." And I said, "Sure, I'll try to help write a song for you." We got together in the studio one evening with our little notes of our five or ten best ideas or titles. We each pulled one out and they eventually ended up in the garbage.

The next morning, we were getting tired and decided to call it quits. So we locked the doors, turned out the lights in the studio, turned off the instruments. Went across the street to the little café - name was Porky's or something like that - and ordered breakfast. I remember I was putting my head on the table. There was nobody in there, I don't think, but us and the cook. And I tiredly put my head on the table, my arms under my head, just for a few seconds. Then I lifted my head up and looked at Dan, and because I felt sorry that he needed another record and we were no help to each other that evening, I said, "Dan, I could just cry like a baby." And he says, "What did you say?" And I said it again. He says, "I like that." So unbeknownst to me, we had a song started. By the time we walked across the street back to the studio, we had the first verse written. When we got in, he turned on the lights and the recorder, and I turned on the Hammond organ. He got his guitar out, and we put on a quarter-inch 90-minute tape, and we finished the song, just recorded a demo.

The next day or two in the morning Alex Chilton came in. I was so tired and weary I didn't know what we had, if anything. I played the little tape demo to him and he smiled and reached out his hand, shook my hand, so I knew he liked it, anyway. And then we got in the studio and recorded it shortly, I think that day.

"Cry Like a Baby" features an electric sitar, played by session guitarist Reggie Young. Author Peter Lavezzoli cites this part as an example of the widespread influence of Indian classical music on rock and pop music in the late 1960s, in the wake of the Beatles' popularisation of the sitar in songs such as "Within You Without You", from their 1967 album Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band. Oldham played keyboards on "Cry Like a Baby" in addition to co-writing it. Chilton, who sang lead vocals on the song, was only 17 years old at the time of recording. This version of the song also features a female backup chorus, a brass section, a string section, bass guitar, organ, piano, and drums.

The original recording is available on numerous compilations, including Billboard Top Rock'n'Roll Hits: 1968, Classic Rock (Time-Life Music), and AM Gold (Time-Life Music).