

To the Editor July 6, 2020

### How Every Empire Falls

I've been watching the impeachment hearings the past few days and have become sad and morose at the state of our country, and the loss of the fundamental operating system of our once great democracy...the rule of law. It made me think of this song.

#### [That's How Every Empire Falls by John Prine](#)

Caught a train from Alexandria  
Just a broken man in flight  
Running scared with his devils  
Saying prayers all through the night  
Oh but mercy can't find him  
Not in the shadows where he calls  
**Forsaking all his better angels**  
**That's how every empire falls**

The bells ring out on Sunday morning  
Like echoes from another time  
All our innocence and yearning  
and sense of wonder left behind  
Oh gentle hearts remember  
What was that story? Is it lost?  
**For when religion loses vision**  
**That's how every empire falls.**

He toasts his wife and all his family  
The providence he brought to bear  
They raise their glasses in his honor  
Although this union they don't share  
A man who lives among them  
Was still a stranger to them all  
**For when the heart is never open**  
**That's how every empire falls**

Padlock the door and board the windows  
Put the people in the street  
"It's just my job," he says "I'm sorry."  
And draws a check, goes home to eat  
But at night he tells his woman  
"I know I hide behind the laws."  
**She says, "You're only taking orders."**  
**That's how every empire falls.**

A bitter wind blows through the country  
A hard rain falls on the sea  
If terror comes without a warning  
There must be something we don't see  
What fire begets this fire?  
Like torches thrown into the straw  
**If no one asks, then no one answers**  
**That's how every empire falls**