

That's How Every Empire Falls

Marianne Faithfull

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 mornng
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.