

The Torch Committee

Josh Ritter

Good evening, may we say again
How pleased we are that you've come in
The day was long, your bed was soft
Still there's some names we're crossing off
It says here by your file you
Have been so loyal, brave, and true
We need not fret, you need not fear
And so we come to why you're here

The torch committee now confirms
The truth of rumors lately heard
That there come monsters in our midst
Well-disguised and carefully hid
Anywhere and anyone
The root of every evil done
But you will help us root them out
The torch committee has no doubt

We see your hands and legs are tied
In clearest breach of by-law five
And left here in this little room
In clearest breach of by-law two
And though you know that we take pains
The process of the law remains
All technicalities aside
You'll see our hands are also tied

For us, the job brings only pain
To see you naked in these chains
To see you naked where you stand
Where so many others have
Imagine how it feels each day
To send so many men a way
But see we've got a job and we
Must dot each "i" and cross each "t"

Something's horribly amiss
How else could you be on our list
Still we all know directive twelve
All those so named must prove themselves
To hungry mob and angry crowd
Young men making families proud
By means not meant for light of day
We wish there was a softer way

Wait, suppose that we untie
Your hands to sign upon this line
To pledge that you have always been
A patriot and citizen
Please ignore the legalese
Lawyers are my right now see
Why we're so happy that you came
Appendix three and list of names

Pardon us but we can't help
But laugh, if you could see yourself
Relax, it's always strange to see

The names on each appendix three
Brothers, fathers, sons, and wives
The ones with whom you've shared your life
Mothers, daughters, sisters, friends
Patriots and citizens

Children playing in the street
Strangers whom you chance to meet
The god to whom you chance to pray
The girl with whom you choose to stay
We know the monsters, know their names
By which they go and which they've changed
And every whisper that we've heard
We've read their poison, every word
How we wish that we could say
That each of them will walk away
But sadly it's the awful truth
It's them or us, it's them or you

So put your finger to the names
The only cure for fear is blame
In doing so, you're doing good
There's many called who never would
Who stuck by what they thought was right
Who disappeared by dark of night
Who disappeared into the breeze
Left no family left to grieve

There, now see, that wasn't bad
As you leave, you can be glad
That you have done your little part
To fight the monsters in the dark
But have a care, the night is cold
Take a torch before you go
And we will keep you safe and warm
That's what the torch committee is for