



TITLE INFORMATION

THE VANISHING 'SHINING CITY ON A HILL'

The Window Into America's Decline

Patrick R. Romain

ArchwayPublishing (510 pp.)

\$35.99 paperback

ISBN: 9781665781633

October 9, 2025

BOOK REVIEW

A debut author surveys America's decline.

Born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and raised in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Romain personifies the American dream; after earning degrees from Harvard and Columbia, he worked for decades in senior roles at some of New York's most prestigious financial services firms. And yet, after living in the U.S. for over 40 years, he moved to Toronto, Canada, in 2016 shortly before the election of president Donald Trump. A staunch believer in "America's promise, grounded in the hopes of people from various backgrounds and cultures," he cautions readers that American democracy and the nation's international reputation are in jeopardy. Blending his personal history with an astute commentary on contemporary politics, the author makes a disturbingly compelling case that "American democracy is more fragile than we often realize."

Organized thematically, the book's chapters cover specific areas in which America's decline is most apparent, from ineffectual foreign policy and congressional gridlock to increased wealth inequality and extreme polarization fueled by Trump and his supporters on social media. The book's critiques center around Trump's illiberal, authoritarian, and anti-democratic policies on immigration, relations with NATO, and a host of other issues (the author lambasts the One Big Beautiful Bill Act as an example of fiscal irresponsibility and critiques Trump's general apathy toward the federal deficit). Perhaps surprisingly, Romain praises conservative icon Ronald Reagan for his optimistic belief in "peace and harmony," his welcoming approach toward immigrants, and his decisive foreign policy, one that forged coalitions rather than alienating traditional allies. While not all readers may buy into this idealized characterization of the Reagan administration, the author's assessment of contemporary America is ideologically balanced and backed by more than 600 endnotes. The book concludes with the intriguing suggestion that Canada is in an ideal position to replace America as a global beacon of democracy.

A nuanced, well-researched look at America unraveling in the age of Trump.