

# The Talking Leaves

Johnny Cash

Sequoia's winters were sixteen silent tongue spirit clean  
He walked at his father's side  
Across the smoking battle ground where red and white men lay al  
l around  
So many here had died  
The wind had scattered around snow white leaves upon the ground

Not leaves like leaves from trees  
Sequoia said what can this be what's the strange thing here I s  
ee  
From where come leaves like these  
Sequoia turned to his father's eyes and he said father you're w  
ise  
From where come such snow white leaves  
With such strange marks upon these squares  
Not even the wise owl could put them there  
So strange these snow white leaves  
His father shielding his concern resenting the knowledge Sequoi  
a yearned  
Crumbled the snow white leaves  
He said when I explain then it's done these are talking leaves  
my son  
The white men's talking leaves  
The white man takes a berry of black and red  
And an eagle's feather from the eagle's bed  
And he makes bird track marks  
And the marks on the leaves they say carry messages to his brot  
her far away  
And his brother knows what's in his heart  
They see these marks and they understand the truth in the heart  
of the far off man  
The enemies can't hear them  
Said Sequoia's father son they weave bad medicine on these talk  
ing leaves  
Leave such things to them  
Then Sequoia walking lightly followed his father quietly but so  
amazed was he  
If the white man talks on leaves why not the Cherokee  
Vanished from his father's face Sequoia went from place to plac  
e  
But he could not forget  
Year after year he worked on and on till finally he cut into st  
one  
The Cherokee alphabet  
Sequoia's hair by now was white his eyes began to lose their li  
ght  
But he taught all who would believe  
That the Indian's thoughts could be written down

Just as the white men's there on the ground and he left us these  
e talking leaves