

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 the
e talking leaves