

Right at the precipice so steep,  
Where the river takes this awful leap,  
Is placed an Island, small in size,  
But like an earthly paradise,  
For lovelier spot is nowhere found  
Than this, our Indian burial ground;  
Where none, unless with honor crowned,  
Can ever be interred.

None but brave men e'er can reach  
It's wooded shore and rocky beach,  
Whereon the sound of human speech  
Is scarcely ever heard.

For on this Isle deep-buried lie  
The bones of many a Brave,  
And Indian chiefs invariably  
Ask this spot for their grave.  
Thus it has been, in days of yore,  
And it is my earnest prayer,  
That, when this mortal life is o'er,  
And my soul is on the other shore,  
My bones may be buried there.  
That Ni-a-gáh-ra's mighty roar  
So solemn, grand and deep,  
May be my dirge forevermore  
As 'twixt its Falls I sleep.'

"Since he told me I've often prayed

That hither I might be led,  
And to my vision be displayed,  
In its scenic majesty arrayed,  
The fairest spot God ever made,  
This Island of the dead."

The Chief assented, "All you heard  
Was true to the minutest word;  
But one more fact I must unfold  
Ere all the Island's tale is told,  
Note its wondrous situation,  
'Tis our Spirit's dread abode;  
'Tis a spot that, since Creation,  
Coward's foot has never trod.  
None but warriors can reach it,  
Others, should they dare to try,  
So our old traditions teach it,  
As they touch its soil, they die."

"All that is false," the Priest replied,  
"Whoever taught you that has lied;  
Strong words, I know, but justified,  
For God alone, who gave us breath,  
Has power over life and death."

The Chief declared, "His faith is best  
Who dares to put it to the test.