Westward the Oregon flows and the Walleway and Owyhee
Eastward, with devous course, among the Wind-river
Mountains,
Through the Sweet-water Valley precipitate leaps the
Nebraska;
And to the south, from Fontaine-qui-bout and the Spanish
sierras,
Fretted with sands and rocks, and swept by the wind of the
desert,
Numberless torrents, with ceaseless sound, descend to the
ocean,
Like the great chords of a harp, in loud and solemn
vibrations.
Spreading between these streams are the wondrous, beautiful
prairies,
Billowy bays of grass ever rolling in shadow and sunshine,
Bright with luxuriant clusters of roses and purple amorphas.
Over them wander the buffalo herds, and the elk and the
roebuck;
Over them wander the wolves, and herds of riderless horses;
Fires that blast and blight, and winds that are weary with
travel;
Over them wander the scattered tribes of Ishmael’s children,
Staining the desert with blood; and above their terrible wars
trails
Circles and sails aloft, on pinions majestic, the vulture,
Like the implacable soul of a chieftain slaughtered in battle,
By invisible stairs ascending and scaling the heavens.
Here and there rise smokes from the camps of these savage
marauders;
Here and there rise groves from the margins of swift
running rivers;
And the grim, taciturn bear, the anchorite monk of the
desert,
Climbs down their dark ravines to dig for roots by the
brook-side,
And over all is the sky, the clear and crystalline heaven,
Like the protecting hand of God inverted above them.

Part II, lines 1-28

The Jewish Cemetery at Newport

How strange it seems! These Hebrews in their graves,
Close by the street of this fair seaport town,
Silent beside the never-silent waves,
At rest in all this moving up and down!
The trees are white with dust, that o’er their sleep
Wave their broad curtains in the south-wind’s breath,
While underneath such leafy tents they keep
The long, mysterious Exodus of Death.

And these sepulchral stones, so old and brown,
That pave with level flags their burial-place,
Seem like the tablets of the Law, thrown down
And broken by Moses at the mountain’s base.
The very names recorded here are strange,
Of foreign accent, and of different climes;
Alvares and Rivera interchange
With Abraham and Jacob of old times.

“Blessed be God! for he created Death!”
The mourners said, “and Death is rest and peace”;
Then added, in the certainty of faith,
“And giveth Life that never more shall cease.”

Closed are the portals of their Synagogue,
No Psalms of David now the silence break,
No Rabbi reads the ancient Decalogue
In the grand dialect the Prophets spake.

Gone are the living, but the dead remain,
And not neglected; for a hand unseen,
Scattering its bounty, like a summer rain,
Still keeps their graves and their remembrance green.
from The Song of Hiawatha

XIV: Picture-writing

In those days said Hiawatha,
"Lo! how all things fade and perish!
From the memory of the old men
Fade away the great traditions,
The achievements of the warriors,
The adventures of the hunters,
All the wisdom of the Medas,
All the craft of the Wabenios,
All the marvellous dreams and visions
Of the Jossakeeds, the Prophets!

"Great men die and are forgotten,
Wise men speak; their words of wisdom
Perish in the ears that hear them,
Do not reach the generations
That, as yet unborn, are waiting
In the great, mysterious darkness
Of the speechless days that shall be!

"On the grave-posts of our fathers
Are no signs, no figures painted;
Who are in those graves we know not,
Only know they are our fathers.
Of what kith they are and kindred,
From what old, ancestral Totem,
Be it Eagle, Bear, or Beaver,
They descended, this we know not,
Only know they are our fathers.

"Face to face we speak together,
But we cannot speak when absent;
Cannot send our voices from us
To the friends that dwell afar off;
Cannot send a secret message,
But the bearer learns our secret,
May pervert it, may betray it,
May reveal it unto others."

Thus said Hiawatha, walking