

## Speech of Big Elk, Ojibwa, when soldiers buried Black Buffalo (1815)

"Do not grieve, misfortunes will happen to the wisest and best of men. Death will come, & always comes out of season. It is the command of the great spirit (Wabanda?) & all nations & people must obey. What is passed & cannot be prevented should not be grieved for. Do not be displeased or discouraged that in visiting your <sup>(agent)</sup> ~~father~~ here you have lost your chief. A misfortune of this kind may never again befall you, but this would have come to you, perhaps at your own village. Five times have I visited this land & never returned with sorrow or pain. Misfortunes do not flourish particularly in any path. They grow everywhere. What a misfortune for me that I could not have died today, instead of the chief who lies before us. The trifling loss my nation would have sustained in my death would have been doubly paid for in the honors of my burial. They would have wiped off everything like regret. Instead of being covered with a cloud of sorrow my warriors would have