Newspapers.com by Ancestry
https://www.newspapers.com/image/1043556923/

Downloaded on Jan 28, 2026

Poetry.

From the Boston Recorder.

THE FUGITIVE SLAVE'S APOSTROPHE TO NIAGARA.

BY GEORGE S. BURLEIGH.

Hail to thy roaring flood,
Eternal torrent! dark Niagara, hail!
How bounds my boiling blood,
As thy loud voice comes thundering on the gale,
And the tumultuous waves thy dark brown rocks assail.

Fierce is thy thunder shock,
As the wild waters in their madness leap
From the eternal rock,
Plunging and raging, with impetuous sweep,
Till on the lake's calm breast thy boiling billows leap.

So terrible and strong,
Whirl maddening passions in the bondman's breast,
Trampled and scarred by Wrong,
Ere the tired spirit finds its hallowed rest,
In Freedom's stormless home and glorious sunlight bless'd.

Roll and roar on, wild river!
Man's fetters cannot bind thy billows free,
Chainless and strong forever;
As thou hast been thy leaping floods shall be,
Guarding, with watery wall, the land of liberty.

Glory to God on high!
Free as thy tide are my unshackled limbs;
And here, unawed, will I
Join the wild chorus, thy mad torrent hymns,
Stirring the pictured mist that o'er thy bosom swims.

Far from the southern plains
I've traced my pathway, through the sunless wild,
Spurning the hated chains
That on my heel clanked heavy, from a child,
Binding to earth the soul-degraded and defiled.

On, by the beacon led,
That burns, unerring, in the northern sky,
O'er the lone fields I fled,
To where thy thunder lifts its voice on high,
And to the bondman tells the land of freedom nigh.

Here by thy foaming surge,
Back on the hated land where I was born—
Land of the chain and scourge—
I pour the fires of unrelenting scorn,
And hatred, that shall burn till life's last ray is gone.

"Home of the *true* and *brave*,"
Where BASTARD FREEDOM broods her mongrel horde,
And on the imbruted slave
Plants the red heel, and with the life-blood poured,
Stains the fell altars, where her horrid name's adored.

It gave me but the chain,
The scourge, and task, and bondman's life of wo;
And ruthless tore in twain
The holiest ties that bind us here below—
Hearts that, inwoven, beat in one united flow.

Nor thus to me alone;
But fettered millions lift their arms on high,
And shriek, and wail, and groan,
To heaven ascending, in one fearful cry,
Bid the red bolts of wrath in hissing vengeance fly.

And yet our God shall turn,
And on this land his fiery volleys pour,
Till his fierce wrath shall burn,
From far Astoria, to her eastern shore,
And from her sable cape, to where thy waters roar.

Joy to the bondman then,
When his right arm is laid for Justice bare,
And loud from every glen
And mountain, lit by one funereal glare,
Ascends the tyrant's wail upon the troubled air.

Then shall thy torrent be
Their strong munition, and its bounding flood
A guard to them that flee
From the Avenger of the negro's blood: [stood.
When blackness shrouds the land where erst her glory

Over thy rugged brow,
Chainless and bright, the bow of promise bends,
Making the dark mist glow,
As Hope the clouds of Sorrow, when she lends
To earth the joyous light which from her glance descends.

Eternal Priestess, thine
Is the pure baptism of the chainless free;
Cool on this brow of mine
Thy holy drops descend, as broad to me
Unroll the temple gates of meek-eyed Liberty.

Let the fell tyrant rage;
Into thy arms my sinewy form I fling,
And though this keel may wage
Mad warfare with thy billows, buffeting [sting.
The roaring floods with might, thou'lt guard me from his

He may not cross thy tide,
With the strong fetters of a tyrant's power;
Thy waves in foaming pride,
The shrinking wretch, in madness, would devour,
And clap their hands, and shout the bondman's triumph hour.

O that the negro's God
Would give to dust this mortal part once more,
That o'er thy awful flood,
Swathed in the cloud-wreathed dun, my soul might soar,
Exulting in the sound of thy eternal roar.

Lond with thy thunder-tone,
My voice shall blend; and when this land shall rock,
With its last earthquake groan,
My shout the tyrant's dying shriek should mock,
And chant the victor hymn to Ruin's rending shock.

Copyright © 2026 Newspapers.com. All Rights Reserved.