

**Classic Poetry Series**

# **Kahlil Gibran**

**- poems -**

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## **Kahlil Gibran (1883-1931)**

Poet, philosopher, and artist, was born in Lebanon, a land that has produced many prophets. The millions of Arabic-speaking peoples familiar with his writings in that language consider him the genius of his age. But he was a man whose fame and influence spread far beyond the Near East. His poetry has been translated into more than twenty languages. His drawings and paintings have been exhibited in the great capitals of the world. In the United States, which he made his home during the last twenty years of his life, he began to write in English.

1883

Gibran Kahlil Gibran was born to a Maronite family, in Bsharri, a town at the foot of Mount Fam al-Mizab, near the Cedar grove in North Lebanon. He was the first born to his mother from her second marriage, her having previously been a widow with only one son, Butros.

1885

Birth of his sister Marianna.

1887

Birth of his second sister, Sultana. 1888 Entered a one-class village school where he learnt the rudiments of Arabic, Syriac, and Arithmetic.

1894

Emigrated with his two sisters and half-brother to Boston, U.S.A. settling in Chinatown. The father, Khalil Gibran, a tax collector and drunkard stayed behind.

1895

Butros opened a small shop, the family's only source of income, while Gibran joined a local school where his name was anglicized to Kahlil Gibran.

1897

Showed particular promise in his classes of drawing and painting. Was introduced to the esoteric Bostonian artist- photographer Fred Holland Day, who was experimenting with photography as art and in whose studies Gibran was photographed in various postures, some in the nude. Was sent back to Lebanon, where he joined al-Hikma high school in Beirut. The program of study laid special stress on Arabic and French language and literature.

1901

Returned to Boston.

1902

Came back to the Lebanon as an interpreter to an American family touring Europe and the eastern Mediterranean countries. Hurried back to Boston upon hearing of the death of his youngest sister, Sultana of tuberculosis.

1903

Struck by two losses: the death of his half-brother Butros from tuberculosis and that of his mother from cancer.

1904

Held in spring a picture exhibition at Fred Holland Day's Studio.

1905

Published in New York, *al-Musiqa (Music)*, a pamphlet in which he eulogizes music, in particular Arabic music with its various intonations.

1906

Published in New York *'Ara'is al-Muruj (Nymphs of the Valley)*, a collection of three short stories, expressive of his anti-feudal and anti-clerical convictions.

1908

Published in New York, *al-Arwah al-Mutamclrrida (Spirits Rebellious)*, a collection of four short stories much in the spirit of *'Ara is al-Muruj*. Left for Paris to study art through the generosity of Mary Haskell .

1910

Met in Paris Ameen Rihani who was on his way to New York. The two visited London together for a few weeks to orient themselves with the art life in the city; they then departed, Gibran to Paris and Rihani to America. Returned to Boston after having spent in Paris two years and four months.

1911

Started to spend long intervals in New York City, sometimes staying with the Rihanis, trying to get introduced to the art and life of the big city and to draw distinguished personalities for income. He completed the illustrations and cover picture for Rihani's *Book of Khalid*. Rented for \$20 in New York a small studio at 51 West 10th Street in a building said to be the first in America to be built exclusively for the use of painters and sculptors.

1912

Became a resident of New York City. Published in New York, *al-Ajniha al-Mutakassira - Broken Wings*), a novelette, dedicated to Mary Haskell. His father died in Lebanon.

1913

Moved to a larger studio, Room 40, in the same building, double the size of the first, with more windows and light.

1914

Published in New York *Dam a wa Ibtisaima (a Tear and a Smile)*, a collection of poetic prose pieces verging on the aphoristic . Held an exhibition at the Montross Galleries on December 14.

1916

Met for the first time, in the offices of al-Funun. Mikhail Naimy, his life long friend and biographer, who had newly arrived that Autumn from the State of Washington, to join the young Arabic literary movement in New York.

1918

Published in New York, *The Madman*, his first work in English, a collection of parables.

1919

Published in New York, *Twenty Drawings*, a selected collection of his drawings with an introduction by Alice Raphael. Published in New York,

al-Mawakib (The Processions), a long Arabic poem in the form of a dialogue between two voices, one that of a spiritually liberated man and the other of a man in bondage.

1920

Published in Cairo, al-'AuasiJ (The Tempests), a collection of poetico-fictional pieces and essays characterized by revolt against man the self-enslaved in the name of man the self- emancipated. Published in New York his second English work The Forerunner, another collection of parables and sayings. Founded with other Syrian co-writers and poets in New York a literary society al-Rabita al-Qalamiyya (The Pen So-ciety), consisting of Gubran as president, Naimy assecretary, W. Katsiflis as treasurer, and N. 'Arida, I. Abu Madl, A.h. Haddad, R. Ayyub, and N. Haddad as members.

1923

Published in Cairo, al-Bada'i' waal-Tara'if (The New and the Marvellous) a number of narratives and essays in the style of al-'AuasiJ; collected and named by a publisher in Egypt with the blessing of Gibran. Published in New York his chef-d'oeuvre The Prophet. Began to show real signs of ill-health.

1926

Published in New York, Sand and Foam, a collection of parables and aphorisms.

1928

Published in New York, Jesus, The Son of Man, an attempt at portraying Jesusthrough a synthesis of different views on Him offered by a number of His contemporaries, making Him in essence almost a duplicate of Almustapha.

1931

Published in New York, The Earth Gods, a long prose poem consisting of a dialogue between three Earth-Gods on the destiny of man. Died on April 10, at St. Vincent Hospital, New York. In the autopsy he is said to have suffered of "Cirrhosis of the liver with incipient tuberculosis in one of the lungs." His body. after sometime in Boston, was returned to Lebanon and laid in the chapel of Mar Sarkis, an old monastery carved in a rock near Bsharrl. Gibran has two works that were published in New York posthumously: The Wanderer, a collection of parables published in 1932 and The Garden of The Prophet in 1933.

This latter work, started by Gibran, was continued and concluded after his death by another pen and should not, therefore, be taken seriously. Al-Majmu'a al-Kamila li Mu'allafat Gubran Khalil Gubran (The Complete Arabic Works of Kahlil Gibran), organized and introduced by Mikhail Naimy appeared in Beirut, 1961.

His works been translated from the Arabic and published posthumously.

1947

Tears and Laughter (Dam'a wa Ibtisama), translated by A.R. Ferris, New York. 1948 Nymphs of the Valley ('Ara'isal-MuruJ), translated by H.M. Nahmad, New York. Spirits Rebellious (al-Arwah al-Mutamarrida), translated by H.M. Nahmad, New York.

1950

A Tear and a Smile (Dam'a wa Ibtisama), translated by H.M. Nahmad, New York.

1958

The Processions (al-Mawakib), translated by George Khairal-lah, New York.

1959

The Broken Wings (al-Ajniha al-Mutakassira) translated by A.R. Ferris New York