KAHLIL GIBRAN

NIGHT AND THE MADMAN

“I am like thee, O, Night, dark and naked; I walk on the flaming path which is above my day-dreams, and whenever my foot touches earth a giant oak tree comes forth.”

“Nay, thou art not like me, O, Madman, for thou still lookest backward to see how large a foot-print thou leavest on the sand.”

“I am like thee, O, Night, silent and deep; and in the heart of my loneliness lies a Goddess in child-bed; and in him who is being born Heaven touches Hell.”

“Nay, thou art not like me, O, Madman, for thou shudderest yet before pain, and the song of the abyss terrifies thee.”

“I am like thee, O, Night, wild and terrible; for my ears are crowded with cries of conquered nations and sighs for forgotten lands.”

“Nay, thou art not like me, O, Madman, for thou still takest thy little-self for a comrade, and with thy monster-self thou canst not be friend.”

“I am like thee, O, Night, cruel and awful; for my bosom is lit by burning ships at sea, and my lips are wet with blood of slain warriors.”

“Nay, thou art not like me, O, Madman; for the desire for a sister-spirit is yet upon thee, and thou has not become alone unto thyself.”

“I am like thee, O, Night, joyous and glad; for he who dwells in my shadow is now drunk with virgin wine, and she who follows me is sinning mirthfully.”

“Nay, thou art not like me, O, Madman, for thy soul is wrapped in the veil of seven folds and thou holdest not thy heart in thine hand.”

“I am like thee, O, Night, patient and passionate; for in my breast a thousand dead lovers are buried in shrouds of withered kisses.”

“Yea, Madman, art thou like me? Art thou like me? And canst thou ride the tempest as a steed, and grasp the lightning as a sword?”

“Like thee, O, Night, like thee, mighty and high, and my throne is built upon heaps of fallen Gods; and before me too pass the days to kiss the hem of my garment but never

to gaze at my face.”

“Art thou like me, child of my darkest heart? And dost thou think my untamed thoughts and speak my vast language?”

“Yea, we are twin brothers, O, Night; for thou revealest space and I reveal my soul.”