

My Friend By Kahlil Gibran

My friend, I am not what I seem. Seeming is but a garment I wear—a care-woven garment that protects me from thy questionings and thee from my negligence.

The “I” in me, my friend, dwells in the house of silence, and therein it shall remain for ever more, unperceived, unapproachable.

I would not have thee believe in what I say nor trust in what I do—for my words are naught but thy own thoughts in sound and my deeds thy own hopes in action.

When thou sayest, “The wind bloweth eastward,” I say, “Aye it doth blow eastward”; for I would not have thee know that my mind doth not dwell upon the wind but upon the sea.

Thou canst not understand my seafaring thoughts,
nor would I have
thee understand. I would be at sea alone.

When it is day with thee, my friend, it is night with me;
yet even
then I speak of the noontide that dances upon the hills
and of
the purple shadow that steals its way across the
valley; for thou
canst not hear the songs of my darkness nor see my
wings beating
against the stars—and I fain would not have thee hear
or see. I
would be with night alone.

When thou ascendest to thy Heaven I descend to my
Hell—even then
thou callest to me across the unbridgeable gulf, “My
companion, my
comrade,” and I call back to thee, “My comrade, my
companion”—for
I would not have thee see my Hell. The flame would
burn thy eyesight
and the smoke would crowd thy nostrils. And I love my

Hell too

well to have thee visit it. I would be in Hell alone.

Thou lovest Truth and Beauty and Righteousness; and I
for thy sake

say it is well and seemly to love these things. But in my
heart

I laugh at thy love. Yet I would not have thee see my
laughter.

I would laugh alone.

My friend, thou art good and cautious and wise; nay,
thou art

perfect—and I, too, speak with thee wisely and
cautiously. And

yet I am mad. But I mask my madness. I would be mad
alone.

My friend, thou art not my friend, but how shall I make
thee

understand? My path is not thy path, yet together we
walk, hand

in hand.