

It's the birthday of poet **Khalil Gibran**, born in a mountain village in Lebanon (1883). When Gibran was a boy, his mother decided to leave her alcoholic husband and take her four children to America. They settled in Boston, where they had relatives, and it was there that a charity worker noticed that Gibran appeared to be artistically gifted. Members of the aristocratic Boston society found him charming, and they began inviting him to social gatherings, where he discussed philosophy and poetry. Numerous aristocratic ladies fell in love with him and became his patrons, but he never married any of them.



One day, a man named Alfred A. Knopf was invited to a gathering at Gibran's apartment. Knopf was just starting up a publishing company, and when he saw how fascinated people were with Gibran, he decided to offer the man a publishing contract. Gibran's first two books with Knopf weren't very successful, but his third was a book called *The Prophet*. When it came out in 1924, *The Prophet* sold slowly at first, but its sales kept growing and growing over time. By 1931, it had been translated into 30 languages. In the 1960s, it became popular with college students. And today, passages from it are still read at weddings, baptisms, and funerals. It is the best-selling book in Alfred A. Knopf's history.