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The following poem, "Layla," by
Shaykh Ahmad al-'Alawi,
is found in the anthology *Music of the Sky*

## *Layla*

Full near I came unto where dwelleth
Layla, when I heard her call.
That voice, would I might ever hear it!
She favored me, and drew me to her,
Took me in, into her precinct,
With discourse intimate addressed me.
She sat me by her, then came closer,
Raised the cloak that hid her from me,
Made me marvel to distraction,
Bewildered me with all her beauty.
She took me and amazed me,
And hid me in her inmost self,
Until I thought that she was I,
And my life she took as ransom.
She changed me and transfigured me,
And marked me with her special sign,
Pressed me to her, put me from her,
Named me as she is named.
Having slain and crumbled me,
She steeped the fragments in her blood.
Then, after my death, she raised me:
My star shines in her firmament.
Where is my life, and where my body,
Where my willful soul? From her
The truth of these shone out to me
Secrets that had been hidden from me.

Mine eyes have never seen but her:
To naught else can they testify.
All meanings in her are comprised.
Glory be to her Creator!
Thou that beauty wouldst describe,
Here is something of her brightness
Take it from me. It is my art.
Think it not idle vanity.
My Heart lied not when it divulged
The secret of my meeting her.
If nearness unto her effaceth,
I still subsist in her subsistence.

— Ahmad al-'Alawi, *A Sufi Saint of the Twentieth Century* by Martin Lings
(Cambridge, UK, 1993)

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Ahmad al-'Alawi's poem
"Layla" reproduced above

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