Ya man La`ibat bihi ash-Shamulu

"You whom the Wine’s Aroma has played with" – Ya Man La`ibat bihi ash-Shamulu

The muwashshah is a form of love poetry which emerged in the cultural Golden Age of Islamic Spain (711-1492 C.E.). One of the traditional settings of the poem is a drinking scene in which the cup-bearer is likened to the Beloved. Many of the poems are written so that they can also be read as mystical poems treating divine love in which the wine and its effects are metaphors for the ecstasy the mystic feels in the love of God and the beauty of the Beloved a symbol for the Beauty of God and His creation.

Ya man La`ibat bihi sh-shamulu
Nashwan yahuzzu hu dala`un
La yumkinuhu l-kalamu lakin
Ma atyaba waqiana w-ahna

ma al`afa hadhihi sh-shamayil
kal-ghusni ma`a n-nasimi mayil
qad hamala tarfu hu rasayil
wa t`azilu ghaybun wa-ghafil

O you whom the wine’s aroma has played with
Exulted with all this flirtation
He cannot speak and yet
How sweet is our time together and how joyful

How charming are your features!
Like a willow-branch swaying in the breeze
His limbs are loaded with messages
The jealous watcher is absent and unaware.
YA MAN LA’IBAT BIHI SHAMULU (Muwashshah)

Maqam: Rast
Iqâ’: Waltz; Darij

I.
YA MAN LA’IBAT BIHI SHAMULU
The intoxicating breeze played with you

MA AL-TAFA HADIHI SHAMAYIL (2x)
How gentle are these qualities

YA LAW, YALA LA LAW, YALA LA LAW, YALA LALLI
MA AL-TAFA HADIHI SHAMAYIL

II.
NASHWAN YA HUZZUHU DALLALUN
He’s moved to ecstasy by the pampering

KAL GHOUSNI MA’A IN-NASIM (I)MAYIL (2x)
Like a branch swinging in the breeze

YA LAW, YALA LA LAW, YALA LA LAW, YALA LALLI
KAL GHOUSNI MA’A IN-NASIM (I)MAYIL

III.
LA YUMKINUHU -L-KALAMU LAKIM
He cannot speak, but

QAD HOMMILA TARFAHU RASAYIL
He’s been carrying messages

YA LAW, YALA LA LAW, YALA LA LAW, YALA LALLI
QAD HOMMILA TARFAHU RASAYIL

IV.
MA ’ATYABA WAQTANA W-AHNA
How sweet and content is our time together

WA’ALZILU GHA’BUN WA GHAFIL (2x)
The one who envied us, absent and unaware

YA LAW, YALA LA LAW, YALA LA LAW, YALA LALLI
WA’ALZILU GHA’BUN WA GHAFIL

Transliteration & translation: L. Eisler, J. Racy, & Abdullah Kdouh