

*To Rosa, Crazy About Romance*

Terrible the beating  
of a heart bloated from too much  
immersion in "Mills and Boon"  
Propped on a pedestal of  
childish romance  
in a mute-blind world  
Look: the glimmer there are not  
jewels but carved-out cadavers whose sheen  
comes from their silver-skeletons;  
ladies and gentlemen exist around  
an old view of love —  
a struggle bereft  
of being equal.  
Smell: your own sweat  
stale from deprivation —  
what can such sweetness redeem?  
Listen to the strike of night  
and the murmur of darkness —  
as though holding itself back, preparing  
for the morning that will dissolve  
corruption and greed.  
Close the book  
its pages now falling off;  
Flow with the fresh dew of the times:  
Here, together we recount and act out  
the story  
of our own making

*Ruby Palma-Beltran*

(Translated by Jenny Llaguno from the original "Kay Rosa, na Mahilig sa Romansa".)