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”.)