

In True Love the Soul

*Ultimately, one loves one's desire
not the thing desired
- Friedrich Nietzsche*

1

In true love the soul embraces the body
he said quoting that old French saw,
then old Benjamin Constant: 'Of all feelings
love is the most egoistic and in consequence
is when crossed the least generous';
love and greed the same animal instinct
called by two names maybe the most
ingenuous expression of egoism,

for while love in woman is a wish to surrender,
to be taken, and in man possessive thirst
(woman gives herself, man accepts,
acquires, and requires ever more of her),
it is for both a carousel brass ring
glorified and deified by culture
(our concepts formed by society and language
our sense of self a mask of civility)

and while man in love is delusional,
a slave, woman in love becomes more perfect,
an actress adept at appearances, artistry,
playing gender roles, embodying
the dionysiac magic of action at a distance
(an art akin to his own of poetry)
moving offstage the reality of our bodies
that under the skin by no means inspire love

and while woman's intellect is perfect
control, presence of mind and utilization
of advantage, man's dwells in the darkness of will
— from woman intelligence, from man heart
and passion (women often amazed at the honor
men pay to woman's heart) though his passion may be
for things more than people — from him rhythm
and harmony, from her melody.

2

I want more and more he said to see as beautiful
what is necessary, not to wage war against
what is ugly, not to accuse even those who accuse,
but to be one who makes things beautiful,
my only negation to be looking away.
My formula for greatness in a human being
is *amor fati*: to want nothing different —
not merely to bear it, but to love it.

3

We were friends who had become estranged,
but this was right and we do not want
to conceal and obscure it from ourselves
as if we had reason to feel ashamed. We are
he said as two ships, each with its goal.
Our paths may cross and we may celebrate
a feast together as we once did
when the two ships rested in a harbor so close

it may have looked as if they had reached their goal.
But then the force of our tasks drove us
into different courses and different seas
and we may never see each other again
or pass each other at night wholly unknowing,
or meet without recognizing one another
our separate paths into different waters
under different suns having changed us so .

4

Law and religion cognate *forma* — *dharma*:
good form, bound by rule of custom;
a sense of duty to the status quo;
a reverential attitude towards the holy.
Out of such abysses one returns
newborn, having shed one's skin,
more ticklish and sarcastic more childlike
yet a hundred times more subtle.