

## **In Love Everything Is Illusion**

*Man is born free, but everywhere is in chains*  
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau

In love, everything is illusion he said,  
what is real are the sentiments for the beautiful  
with which love animates us and makes us love.

This beauty is not in the object of our love  
but like conscience, *amour-propre*, law,  
morality and love itself, arising

not in nature but in our imagination,  
the response of natural feelings to the cold-hearted  
calculations of bourgeois society.

Everything is good as it leaves the hands  
of the Author — desire, lust, self-love,  
the self-centered freedom of pre-social man

to whom one woman was like another,  
no notions of merit, attachment, longing  
for reciprocal bonds of lasting affection

no moral dependence on others whose opinions  
must be taken account of because  
one's own self-esteem depends on them.

Equal in what they have in common, what belongs  
to the species; where they differ man and woman  
are not comparable. In the union of sexes,

each contributes to the common aim  
but not in the same way: woman's reason  
is practical, man's speculative.

By nature, he is stronger, driven by desire;  
she is more docile, of more subtle mind,  
burdened with both desire and female need.

To him, abstract thought and generalization.

To her, presence of mind, incisiveness,  
sociability and moral acumen,

the art to make men attend to her needs.  
She learns from him what must be seen.  
He learns from her what must be done

when war of all against all has not been ended  
by social contract, only relocated  
from open range killing fields to the marketplace;

that — in an age when women must serve a being  
so imperfect, so often full of vice,  
so insensitive to others as man —

the civilized alternative is love,  
reciprocal love in marriage and family  
based not on contract but romantic ideals.