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Orthoparadoxy: The Temptation (from the Modern Testament)

by Michael Theune

Then after he was led to that place, a voice spoke to him, saying, *All of this will be yours if you leap.* And in that moment he was made to see—through veils of mist, in chaotic seethings, undulations, fissures—the rupturing, vague and monstrous figures of a world as yet unformed, and he cried, *What kind of seduction is this? Where are the bright and vaulting thoughts, the celestial songs, the beautiful and handsome economies?* And the voice said, *What you see is an instant, a timeless moment without duration. The world you want requires first your leap and then your longing. A world without want is a world that could never be.*

And now, because he recalls glimpsing some insight and gleaning on occasion some glorious strain, he thinks he must have leapt, though, staring at the shards of his unfinished poems, he cannot tell if he flew or fell.

> A student could acquire a considerable amount of literary knowledge by saying the opposite of what the poets of this century have said. He would replace their affirmations with negations.
>
> —Lautreamont

Marx, one of the great poets of the nineteenth century, took Lautreamont's idea seriously, and, as is said, turned Hegel on his head. Thus began the new theology: Orthoparadoxy.

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Sade on Keats: *Cruelty is truth, truth, cruelty.*

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Consciousness might be regarded as a product of the ability to wake casually from sleep.

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To love and to question: two of life's most important activities, and the two most incommensurable.

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Where to turn? The whole guidebook is dogeared.

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Attention founders between seeking and looking after.

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Jesus made a spirit leap from a cliff. Now, after Kierkegaard and the Klein photograph, we are convinced of the presence of a spirit only by a leap.

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The Surrealist ethic: *Cannot implies must.*

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Necessity is a mother—

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Those who are sad without God are much more the spectacle than those who "have God" and are sad. Those who have God wail at a wall. Those without wail at an open gate.

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Seriousness: the corpse of religion.

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All the poets think, *Soon a philosopher will quote me, and my job will be done.* All the philosophers think, *Soon a poet will quote me . . .*

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The hiss at the end of metaphysics.

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Sometimes I imagine myself as Nietzsche imagining himself as the envied Crucified One. I prepare my answers for the modern Scribes and Pharisees. They will ask, *What is the most important sense?* And I will answer, already dreaming of the delectable cross, *A sense of calling.*

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Too many poems travel only at the speed of explanation.

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How shall we investigate the claims of Christianity? No one is willing anymore to touch a wound.

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Some Christians claim that dinosaur bones were put on Earth to test our faith. Nietzsche claims the same thing about the Bible.

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Those who claim that humanity is more than a myth usually want to reduce us to the status of parable.

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According to Aristotle's Ethics, the realm of virtue is situated between extremes of action. For example, courage is the ethical middle ground between the extremes of cowardice and foolhardiness. Thus, many perceive Aristotle's golden mean as an endorsement of prudence, of moderation. However it might also be noted that Aristotle's extreme actions seem unthinking, automatic—one simply is a coward or a fool. Only at the mean is there risk. Instead of prudence, perhaps the point of the middle is ecstasy.

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A proper form of care will move the recipient to new forms of risk.

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Visionary poetry is still possible, but its light must be like what is *inside* the eye.

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In Situ

There is pity for the storm gods.
There is compassion for the destitute.
And there you are, murdered
Between two thieves.

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The talking cure: the new bleeding!

To be continued . . .