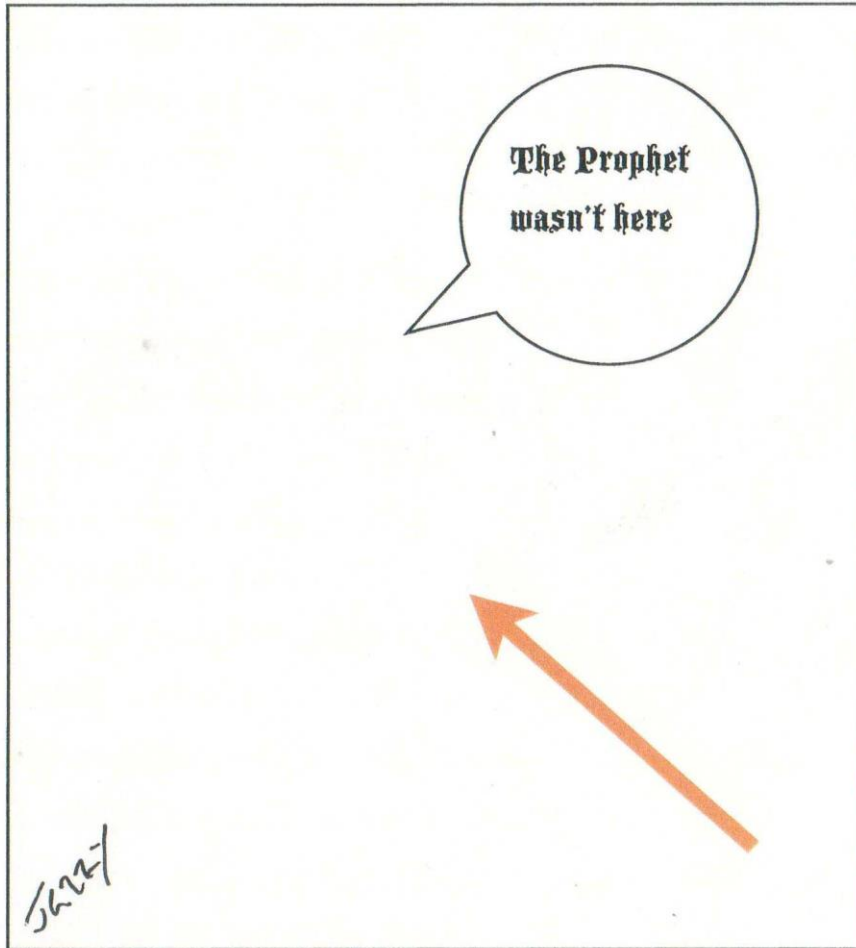


THE GREAT DA VINCI



WRITTEN BY
THE SPEECH PAINTER

THE GREAT DA VINCI

I saw a cartoon caption
A neat, concise idea
And an arrow pointing
In ruby red
To a white and empty space
And a rubbed out pencil line
That could have been a face.
The caption it was brilliant
The best I'd seen all year
Not the usual pun
By some pithy sloganeer.
It stuck inside my head
Like pop songs that you hear
On white in black this art attack
Made me choke my beer.
A plain white piece of paper
A neat, concise idea
A single cartoon caption said
The Prophet wasn't here.

Art as radical as Duchamp
As light as a Vermeer
It had the simple clarity
Of an ancient fabled seer
But it was by some satirist
Some Frenchy Musketeer.
So taken by the caption
I jumped straight on a train
I went in search of genius
I felt a touch insane.
I went to search for heaven
I went to spread the news
I went in search of holy men
I went to hear their views
So funny like comedians
Not easily amused.
I was looking for an image
I went straight to the Louvre
For a picture that could show us
How us humans could improve.
I saw the Mona Lisa
And that wry and subtle smile
Was she dreaming of her suicide
Of going out in style?

I pondered on Da Vinci
Did he have the secret code
Was the answer to be found
Down any other road?
How could he paint divinity
The secret souls of man
Who searched and dreamt of flight?
So I flew off to Milan.
And I walked where others walked
To take a timely look
At some fellow sitting down
From some other famous book.
Da Vinci the cartoonist
Got that holy downward stare
But I didn't see no Prophet
The Prophet wasn't there.
So off I went again
Like tourists do all year
I thought I heard my calling,
I heard a call to prayer.
I went in search of something
Though God knows what is was
I went in search of something
I went searching just because.

**I walked the streets of Peckham
And spurned some dodgy gear
I searched the stalls of Mecca
For a Beckham souvenir
And in that holy city
Where millions bow to pray
I went looking for a birthplace
A monument, a sign,
Some sort of holy Graceland
Where I could stand in line
But all I could find was concrete
And carpet on the walls
And people dropping dead
And endless shopping malls
But I saw there was a Hilton
Where I could lay my head.
But I didn't like the fasting
And I missed my ready meals
And I didn't like their hit parade
And there were no roulette wheels
And I didn't like the bedspread
All that gold and red
So I took a plane to Vegas
And the Hilton there instead.**

**I saw a hip magician
Take a rabbit by the ear
I saw it thrown inside a hat
I saw it disappear.
He folded up some paper
With a sketch in pen and ink
I was watching all the time
I was was trying not to blink.
There was an arrow on the paper
Some other guy's idea
And a cartoon and a punchline
Neat, concise and clear.
And then a puff of smoke
The air was really thick
And then a blinding flash
And then his famous trick
And then a small ovation
And then more cries and cheers
And then endless silken handkerchiefs
To wipe away the tears
As a thousand rabbits
Bred like rabbits
And then a thousand more**

And then the great finale
Encore, encore, encore!
The magician stood there laughing
He stood there with his wand
He tapped the damn thing twice
And the stage became a pond.
I saw him walk on water
His wand became a pen
He had a calm serenity
He had a look of Zen
He looked just like Da Vinci
He sang a catchy tune
He juggled sticks of dynamite
He drew a mean cartoon.
I saw him fix the doubters
With a wild Italian stare
And as he rose above our heads
He wrote these words upon the air,
“All we have is ridicule
To those who trade in fear”
And he pulled out a piece of paper
From deep inside his rear.

**One tasteless piece of paper
That stank of blood and shite
One arrow dipped in ruby red
On paper gleaming white
One simple, single caption
You just had to fucking cheer
That single cartoon caption read
The Prophet wasn't here.**