

54. **Ah, Leonardo!**

“small rooms discipline the mind

LARGE ONES DISTRACT IT”

“How many changes of state and circumstance have followed since the wondrous form of this fish died here in this hollow winding recess? Now destroyed by time, patiently it lies within the narrow space, and with its bones despoiled and bare, it is become an armour and support to the mountain which lies above it.”

Ah! Leonardo! What a scientist -- geology, physics, chemistry, anatomy, botany, aerodynamics, maybe even psychology. What an artist -- pencil, pen, paint.

So intelligent, so imaginative, so tragic!

You were your own worst enemy! What Renaissance prince could understand submarines and helicopters? Why invent a code for your notebooks that took nearly 500 years to decipher? Your self-mixed paints have peeled from the fresco of *The Last Supper*. The most famous of your nineteen paintings that survive, *La Gioconda*, your *Mona Lisa*, hidden by triple-pane plate glass, smiles enigmatically, at tourists.

Ah, Leonardo!

“THE SUPREME MISFORTUNE IS WHEN THEORY
OUTSTRIPS PERFORMANCE.”