

**DEATHLESS NUCLEAR FAMILY  
OF THE SPANGLED MIND**

—O the pepper.—The pasta.—I hope we hear the one about California.  
—Such a lovely song.—Such a lovely place.—The crushed pepper.  
—At Grossman's my dentist I caught a commercial on his television  
For that concert.—On the National Channel.—At 8.—Well you wait  
Until the sauce starts to simmer.—It's nearly time.—Then add sugar.  
—And your tooth Helen?—Had an ache.—But it don't hurt to eat?  
—It does but Bob with all this good food how could I not help but eat?  
—Sue this crab dip's sure delish.—Thank my Aunt Louise in California.  
She sneaked the recipe from her fave Chinese buffet.—How much sugar  
Should I use Sue?—Two tablespoons'll do. Then add a pinch of pepper.  
—The pasta.—O Joe and that television!—Pass the pasta.—Wait wait  
I can't hear one word what you're sayin.—The pasta.—The television!  
Turn it down!—Say please.—Joe!—Why must he eat at that television?  
—Please pass the pasta please.—Joe!—It's no use.—We'll have to wait  
Till we have his attention.—Man I gotta say Sue! These stuffed peppers!  
Fabulous!—I can't remember those words.—I just might have to eat  
One more.—Words?—How it all begins. That song. About California.  
—Fab. Plain fab.—Save space for cake Bob.—Gotta watch my sugar.  
—Cake!—O no.—No?—O no.—Something bout an alibi.—Your sugar?  
—Means his diabetes.—So no dessert for me.—That goddamn television!  
—Sue you three should see Louise.—Bring me the crushed red pepper.  
—Maybe take her to Disney.—O they got it all. Eat in Italy. Greece. Eat  
In Mexico. Wherever.—Member Disney Jay? We took him to California.  
To Disney Land.—Member Jay?—No I don't remember.—Wait wait.  
—You just go from one to the other.—O.—Morocco.—No.—Tokyo.—Wait.  
O let me think.—Really is a small world after all.—It wasn't California.  
It was the World. Florida! O that place! Like walkin inside a television!  
—Coffee? Tea?—Coffee.—Coffee!—Tea.—Coffee.—Coffee.—Cream? Sugar?  
—A dreamworld. A cartoon.—Both please.—Looks like Joe could eat  
Some more.—Coffee Joe?—He's deaf as can be Betty.—The pepper.  
—O will you take this to your grandpa. He don't eat without that pepper.  
—I can hear it in my head.—Dessert's on!—And turn down the TV.  
—A dark desert highway.—Here we go.—Sue that's too much sugar.  
—Eat your cake Ange.—Cool wind in my hair.—Stop singing and eat.  
—What on earth is that song?—It's 8 everybody.—O I really can't wait.  
—But why that bit about colitis in the air?—That's the Motel California!

—I do hope they kill that beast.—And his uniform!—My god more rain.  
—Did you see his uniform?—To me it seems it's all inside their head.  
—I mean what is this thing they sing of?—You know. Those inner voices.  
—Same one he wore on the Enola Gay!—Inner voices? What a lot of talk!  
—Woul'da been one hell of a parade.—We should do some kinda toast.  
You know it's not every day we're all here together.—Less and less I fear.  
—We do this each week.—See what I believe the song's about is the fear  
Of endless pleasure.—You gotta shut that window Bob. Before the rain  
Comes floods the kitchen.—That's right Jay. Someone oughta do a toast.  
—But it's like the night man says. We are programmed to receive.—Talk  
About nonsense.—I always thought it's about what drugs do to your head.  
—Could be our new tradition.—Uncle Hal did drugs and he heard voices.  
—Was his conscience dear.—For years Bob's been hearin the voices.  
Germans. Always talkin in his ear whisperin like.—Yes sometimes I fear  
My mind still moves in and out of the war.—Mein Bob. Mein.—We talk  
About it sometimes.—Hello the window.—Quick just look at all the rain!  
—Hello there!—Hello?—Anybody listening?—I said we'd do a toast.  
—Something.—Who's gonna do it?—Anything.—Gotta be Jay the head  
Of the table.—Bob you okay?—Jay!—Bob do you hear us?—In my head  
I always hear the ocean.—Bob?—Jay!—Think he's hearin those voices?  
—Still don't believe they canceled the parade.—If no one won't I'll toast  
Myself.—To us!—Postpone it maybe but.—But?—These are times I fear  
We've forgotten about our soldiers.—Canceled? Because of a little rain?  
—Those men are heroes.—Boom!—Survivors.—Betty please I can't talk  
About it anymore.—A blast from the past!—God Bob.—How can you talk  
Like that.—Summer soldiers all of them. A touch of rain and they head  
For the hills.—Rhine Bob. Rhine.—Rhine?—Rain Bob.—Like the rain  
In Spain falls mainly on the plain.—Now here she goes with them voices.  
—O leavin on a jet plane.—Don't know if I'll be back again.—Well I fear  
For the worst.—Now there's somethin to toast.—Toast? I don't want toast.  
—Can't hear a thing can he?—Nope.—No Joe. Not toast. Toast! Toast!  
—To us!—What?—Nothing!—To us!—He can't hear us over all the talk.  
—Sure comin down.—That line about the prisoners stuck in my head.  
—Prisoners?—Of our own device.—Stop with the prisoners. Bob's voices  
Will start up again.—Shakes'em good.—The window!—Bob nothin to fear  
Sittin here havin ourself a meal.—Nope nothin really.—Only a little rain.