

Beware of the Sentient Chili

by Chris Weber

My sisters, brother, and more friends started their college careers at the Southern California institution, El Camino College. A running gag there called its distinctive chili... sentient. This filk became my first professional writing sale, to "Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine." The dirge-like tune is original.

Beware of the sentient chili
Which burbles away on your stoves.
The peppers are silently plotting
With legumes, tomatoes, and cloves.
At night when you're comfortably sleeping
And lie unaware in your beds.
The vegetables plan insurrection.
The lettuce are seeking new heads.

It may start with slight indigestion
From underdone turnip cake crumbs.
Frustration in several world leaders,
Whose rice seems to stick to their gums.
In kitchens across every nation
The tiniest things will go wrong.
The plot of the sentient chili
Strikes Moscow and Rome and Hong Kong.

The casserole, spinach, and cheesecake
Lend quiet support to the scheme.
The nerves of a planet are stretched thin,
While tempers start slowly to steam.
Still, none see the grand machinations
Now tilting world balance awry.
The stage set for final disaster
The chili sits back with a sigh.

Then one day the conflict is started
By generals whose lunches were odd.
The mushrooms rejoice as their brothers
Stalk city to city like God.
When dust and all clamors are settled,
There's not a soul left from the fray.
The sentient chili just chuckles
And happily simmers away.