

**PARTY OF FIVE** by Robert Hershon

you could put a chair at the end  
or push the tables together  
but dont bother  
This banged-up little restaurant where you  
would expect no rules at all  
has a firm policy against seating  
parties of five  
And you know you are  
a party of five  
It doesn't matter if one of you  
offers to leave or if  
you say you could split into  
a party of three and a party of two  
or if the five of you come back tomorrow  
in Richard Nixon masks and try to pretend  
that you don't know each other  
It won't work: You're a party of five  
even if you're a beloved regular  
Even if the place is empty  
Even if you bring logic to bear  
Even if you're a tackle for the Chicago Bears  
it won't work  
You're a party of five  
You will always be a party of five  
A hundred blocks from here  
a hundred years from now  
you will still be a party of five and you will  
never savor the soup  
or compare the coffee or  
hear the wisdom of the cook  
and the wit of the waitress or  
get to hum the old -time tunes among which  
you will find  
no quintets