

**WHY I CALLED YOU ALL HERE  
TOGETHER ON MY BIRTHDAY**

*April 23, 1985*

I was going to let it go by  
forget about it and  
not tell anyone.

Does a leaf announce its birthday  
and have a leafy, twiggy party?  
Do the roots and trunk send

gifts of sweet sap?  
But then I began  
to be haunted

by this tendency toward hermitage –  
the pull of the magnetic darkness;  
that solitude and death

have more answers than life,  
and probably, once over the hurdle,  
less pain and disappointment.

But there is a safe sweetness  
in being in love only with yourself.  
I knew then that I needed

to be with you, my friend.  
For life and love and  
the risk of it

is the “dangerous element”  
we are so thoroughly “immersed in”;  
what we are converged in is each other,

and together building more  
and more harmonies  
we make forays into the mysteries.

So this is why I brought  
you together tonight  
for dinner at the Grand Piano.

Thus to honor the Haight-Ashbury  
and the dangerous dream  
that became a reality here.

And to reaffirm to you  
my love and faithfulness  
with the hope that they may grow.

Perhaps the flower does announce  
its birthday and calls the bee  
and hummingbird to its sweet pollen –

I offer to you this gift  
of the sea, this Sand Dollar,  
I found today at low tide

on Ocean Beach. Its flower  
called to me as I walked  
against a cold wind, wondering.