

## **Walking up Government Street**

On the other side of the tea shop window,  
a woman lifts a small clay cup to her lips,  
and steam wreathes her face with incense.

Outside, cherry blossoms  
blow in pink tornados around my feet,  
swirl the curb and stick  
petals on a wet, black dog  
leashed to a trashcan.

A yellow bicycle with a basket  
and a polished silver bell  
leans against a wooden bench.

Today, I want to be the kind of person  
who rides a yellow bicycle  
with a basket full of boy choy  
and fragrant pears. I want  
to pedal across the blue bridge, ringing  
my polished silver bell at strangers.  
I want to whistle tunes  
sung by bright-cheeked children  
in school playgrounds.  
I want to annoy people with my happiness.

Here, on a street floating with spring,  
even store windows papered with old news  
and the man sleeping below a stone lion  
by the Chinatown gate – even they seem hopeful  
in this wind of falling flowers.

Over the city, all the clouds  
of unknowing let go the sky, surrender  
to this season's sugared rush.

Time scatters its petals on the street,  
over the dark hair of strangers,  
into the open hand of a young girl who stands  
with her mother under a polka-dot umbrella,  
waiting for the light to change.

*by Carla Funk, April 12, 2007  
in celebration of National Poetry Month*