

# Children Off the Buses

## Observing Day One

Children off the ICE bus  
So tired, so dirty, so hungry.  
Unsure, skeptical, frightened.

THEN...

A wide welcoming smile, a snack  
A stuffed animal to hug.  
Comes a warm shower, new clothes, a hot meal.  
Finally, no longer to sleep in the dirt under the  
bridge,  
There's a REAL bed, a bed soft, warm, clean.

Next morning, after breakfast,  
Ready to laugh and play.  
Ready to start fulfilling their American dreams.

"Welcome to the U.S.  
Now you're becoming one of us."

## Soccer

All boys, all ages, laughing  
Kicking balls in the motel parking lot.  
"You kick."  
I run. I got it. "My turn to kick."

We're all good. Good for our ages, that is.  
(Even the "littles" are amazing as they  
control the ball with their feet.)

Joy, relief from weeks past.  
Energized by being here.

"I kick. You run. You got it.."

Question: Where are the girls?

## Where Are The Girls?

The boys are laughing and running and playing  
soccer.  
The girls are standing in the shadows watching and  
hugging teddy bears.  
The girls color coloring books or sit and watch and  
hold a parent's hand.  
Mostly shy, mostly quiet, they watch the soccer  
game.

Want to join and play?  
Hard to say.  
Their culture tends to encourage quieter activities  
for girls.  
Tomboys, no. Mixed gender sporting activities, no.  
Quiet supervision, yes.  
There are "guy things" and "girl things". Don't mix  
them.

Will it be different here?  
Will girls be taught not to stand back?  
To laugh and run and play soccer?  
Here there are few "guy things" or "girl things".  
There are "people things".  
Equality for all. Still coming - but closer every day.

Move out of the corner, Let go of the hand.  
Paint the world instead of a coloring book.  
It is different in the U.S..  
There's freedom to play soccer.  
Even for girls.

From Spring 2019  
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