Kindness

**Mindy Bùi**

My heart was pounding as I stepped into line. Knees shaking, stomach growling, and head spinning, I fold my arms close to my chest. I watch my little sister get into line behind me. She sits down on the road and I reach my hand out to tell her to stand up. She doesn’t. I find I barely have the strength to stand myself. The world is spinning again. I close my eyes.

There’s so much noise. People shouting, screaming, crying, pleading.

“Back of the line! Back of the line!” some officer shouts over and over.

“Please, I need water for my mommy!” a little girl, younger than my sister, cries.

Instead of helping her, the officer pulls out a large slab of wood and hits her. Once. Twice.

“Back of the line! Back of the line!”

It feels as if the cups of water are millions of miles away from us. Then again, everything does these days. I hear the sound of a distressed bird looking for food. I close my eyes again.

The next time I open them, I almost fall down in disbelief. I’m even further from the water than when I stepped into line. My sister coughs uncontrollably beside me.

There’s a woman in fancy clothing in front of me. How did she afford that? Her sleek black purse with gold chains looks unreal in this white world we’re in.

“Oh! Cassandra, what a beautiful purse you have there!” another woman in a short light blue dress comments, walking towards her. She steps right into line. Right in front of me.

“Umm, excuse me-” I start to whisper.

“Oh,” she says, putting a gloved hand to bright red lips, “I’m sorry sweetie.”

But she does nothing.

I don’t know how I got here. How any of us got here in fact. It’s been happening forever. I’m tired of this way of life. I need to go back to how things were before. All I know now is that we are in a white room where everyone is separated into two groups. I gave my cup of water to that mother. ◼

Tết 2025 Vui Vẻ

*Tết đến!*

*Hoa đào nở rộ, một niềm vui đỏ thẩm*

*Chào mùa xuân, ước một năm mới an bình*

*Tiếng cười vang vang, tiếng trống rộn ràng*

*Ngày đoàn tụ mang đến niềm vui bất tận*

*Trẻ em cười khúc khích, đón nhận bao lì xì*

*Những giấc mơ bay xa, như cánh chim không biết mỏi*

*Tiệc mừng Xuân đông đủ, không thiếu bánh tét, bánh chưng*

*Hạnh phúc thăng hoa, tình thân chan hòa*

*Những ngày vui Tết sẽ mãi đọng lại trong tim*. ◼

**Adela (TNTT)**

