

Four Nice Girls

Four nice girls came past on Sunday.

Four nice girls
dressed appropriately
for their age
for my street
for the time of day
for the weather.

Dressed so that “appropriately”
would likely be called old fashioned.

Four nice girls
One laughed because something was funny,
not because she had to.

Another said a polite hello
with no more than a sweet smile.

A third said thanks
for a wayward soccer ball’s return.

The fourth said nothing
her older sister couldn’t.

Four nice girls.
I had forgotten them,
lost among a lost generation
with so many choices
that it makes so few
and then,

mostly the wrong ones.

The abandoned park outside my fence
where young voices grew old
and ran for adult playgrounds,
where four nice girls
kicked and giggled and chatterboxed innocence
long bled from this place.

Where they ran the grass turned green
and ghosts of dogs barked children’s songs

whilst four nice girls played their game,
collapsing in laughter and hugs
on a lovely Sunday afternoon
as rain washed their smiles.
I wanted to thank these four nice girls
but having learned misunderstanding's risk
to the innocence in all of us,
I chose instead to add my smile -
the happy old teacher one -
and allowed my heart to defy its chains
and thoughts to drift to simpler times
when too much fun changed your life
it didn't take it.
When children became adults
after they were ready
and young girls only carried babies
in their arms for aunties or mums
and childhood didn't end in sadness
and four nice girls
didn't look unusual
kicking a ball
in the park
on a wet Sunday afternoon.

Copyright © 2009 Peter Langston. All rights reserved. Peter Langston asserts his right under the Copyright Act 1968 to be identified as the author of this work. Apart from any fair dealings for the purpose of private study, research, criticism or review, as permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means: electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording or any other-except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior permission of the publisher. Email for permission to use content plangsto@bigpond.net.au