MARIYN NELSON
Making History

Blue and White Orlon Snowflake Sweater, Blue Snowpants, Red Galoshes
(Smoky Hill AFB, Kansas, 1955)

Somebody took a picture of a class
standing in line to get polio shots,
and published it in the Weekly Reader.
We stood like that today. And it did hurt.
Mrs. Liebel said we were Making History,
but all I did was sqwunch up my eyes and wince.
Making History takes more than standing in line
believing little white lies about pain.
Mama says First Negroes are History:
First Negro Telephone Operator,
First Negro Opera Singer At The Met,
First Negro Pilots, First Supreme Court Judge.
That lady in Montgomery just became a First
by sqwunching up her eyes and sitting there.