

## **Mae Jemison Counts Down Aboard the 1992 *Endeavor* Shuttle**

By Kimberly Simms

My blood pumps itself to a distant planet.  
My brain is a supernova. My skin is a million stars.  
The orange straps across my suit are bright as a fire.  
I'm thinking of Grandmother, the swish, swish, swish

of her broom on that Alabama porch, the hot grits  
bubbling on the stove, the smell of biscuits and bacon.  
On an autumn evening, we'd slowly launch ourselves  
in the swing, our feet rising across the pumpkin moon.

The year of my birth, 1956, Alabama still called segregation  
separate but equal. My school teacher mama wanted more.  
Her and daddy moved us to blue Chicago  
to spirit, to hope, to zeal, to inspiration.

Grandmother's tiny Alabama dreams never imagined 127 orbits  
of the Earth. Mission control is counting slowly down  
and this *Endeavor* will shoot me into history  
like a blazing star. What new horizons will I find

in a thousands years of blackness. The earth  
and all its heavy history fall. I float, an impossible  
dream, a black woman in a white NASA Suit,  
an Alabama child with the whole world in her hands.

*example of Dramatic Monologue.*