

MARILYN 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.