

# Book review in Nov/Dec 2005 issue of

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# SB&F

SCIENCE BOOKS & FILMS: YOUR REVIEW GUIDE TO SCIENCE RESOURCES FOR ALL AGES

**Scott, Winston E. (Capt. USN Ret.)**  
NASA Astronaut. *REFLECTIONS  
FROM EARTH ORBIT.*

(Illus.) Burlington, Ontario: Apogee  
Books, 2005, 128pp. \$23.95. ISBN 1-  
894959-22-1.

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Having flown twice aboard the Space Shuttle, the author of this volume, a pilot with the U.S. Navy, interweaves his experience during those missions with memories of his childhood. In the first two chapters, he reminisces about his early interest in aviation, his love of music and his involvement in the school band, and his plans for postsecondary education.

Beginning in the third chapter, the author describes the living and working conditions aboard the shuttle, again interspersed with other childhood memories, such as his so-called friend in first grade who always seemed to be around when his lunch money would mysteriously disappear.

In the fifth grade, the author was enrolled in an advanced reading and math class in which he became proficient

at mental math. As a pilot, he frequently was able to put this skill to good use. In that class, he also memorized a poem that included the lines "...be the labor great or small, do it well or not at all." Although he misinterpreted it to mean, "Become the labor" rather than "Whether the labor [is] great or small," that very misunderstanding on his part illustrates his approach to work and life in general: become involved in what you are doing, and do the very best you can. In the last chapter, the author illustrates how that attitude of perseverance helped in a complicated capture of a satellite (Spartan) during a spacewalk on his more recent shuttle mission.

This book is more than just a commentary by an astronaut on conditions aboard the shuttle or of what the Earth looks like from orbit; it is a summary of reflections on the part of an African-American who overcame adversity to become "more than I ever thought I could be" (p. 125). The book is an encouraging and motivational one, for both young people and adults. *-Ronald F. Smith, Winnipeg Catholic Schools, Winnipeg, MB, Canada*



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