

football dreams

By Jacqueline Woodson

No one was faster
than my father on the football field.
No one could keep him
from crossing the line. Then
touching down again.
Coaches were watching the way he moved,
his easy stride, his long arms reaching
up, snatching the ball from its soft pockets
of air.

My father dreamed football dreams,
and woke up to a scholarship
at Ohio State University.
Grown now
living the big-city life
in Columbus
just sixty miles
from Nelsonville
and from there
Interstate 70 could get you
on your way west to Chicago
Interstate 77 could take you south
but my father said
no colored Buckeye in his right mind
would ever want to go there.

*From Columbus, my father said,
you could go just about
anywhere*

Jacqueline Woodson, "football dreams" from *Brown Girl Dreaming*. Copyright © 2014 by Jacqueline Woodson. Used by permission of Nancy Paulsen Books, an imprint of Penguin Young Readers Group, a division of Penguin Random House LLC.
Source: *Brown Girl Dreaming* (Nancy Paulsen Books, 2014)