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You have to admire the people who fly the shuttle. There you are, sitting on top of two oversized roman candles and enough hydrogen to make the Hindenberg look like a wienie roast, secure in the knowledge that the whole thing is controlled by a million lines of computer software, and that every component of this complex and dangerous system was made by the lowest bidder.

C G7
When the rocket stands before us like a tower of glass and steel
C G7
Then no words in any language can express the way we feel
C F C
Mingled joy and hope and terror as we're starting on our way
F C G C
And we suddenly consider that it just might help to pray.

C G7
So pray to great green Mother Earth and the grim old god of Space,
C G7
And the gods of flame and metal whom we've summoned to this place.
C F C
Oh you gods of flight and physics, now you have us in your care;
F C G C
We hope that you will listen to a rocket rider's prayer.

This verse is dedicated to the management of Morton Thiokol.

So first let's pray to Vulcan, ugly god of forge and flame,
And also wise Minerva, now we glorify your name,
May you aid our ship's designers now and find it in your hearts
To please help the lowest bidders who've constructed all her parts!

This verse is dedicated to whoever is in the most trouble this week.

As we're lifting off it's Mercury who'll help us in our need
Not only as the patron god of health and flight and speed
We hope that he will guard us as we're starting on our trip
As the god of Thieves and Liars, like the ones who built this ship.

If we make it into orbit where the sky is starry black
We'll have time to praise old Mother Earth and hope she wants us back
And tell all the other deities who've helped us on our way
That it's nice to visit Heaven, but we didn't come to stay.

Now we're coming down from orbit back to where the air is thick
With no engines and the glidepath of a highly polished brick
And with nothing but those tiles between our hides and flaming Hell,
Better pray to Hell's own Pluto that they glued those suckers well.

So now we're back on Earth again; the sky's a lovely blue.
All you deities we didn't name, you know we love you too.
We hope that you're not angry and you'll keep us in your grace;
We may need your help the next time that we're heading into space.

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