

# Caveat Vendor

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*by Nancy Carver, Journalism Senior*

A renovated brick facade  
Encloses their world  
A land of sturdy oxfords,  
Glass counters and  
Coat-hanger smiles  
A place where  
“The customer is Always Right,”  
Is emblazoned in their minds  
And on their paychecks

Computer-like minds recall  
The darling snowflake mittens  
Stocked two years ago and  
When the Currier and Ives  
Crewel kits go on sale  
Noon hours are for  
Catching up on gossip  
In the tearoom  
Or for stalking treasures  
In others' territory  
Perfume is eyed ruefully  
Before they settle for  
The \$3.95 cologne in the  
Drugstore around the corner

Like the heroine in *The Scarlet Letter*  
They are marked for the world to see-  
"Ester," "Mary Nell," "Lila"  
Outside the doors each has  
Her own past and future  
Yet within their special world  
They seem like endless clones  
Repeated in store after store  
Across the land