

M. F. Hershman

BUCKEYE ROAD IN CLEVELAND MEANT

Buckeye Road in Cleveland meant:
Hungarians going
shopping, store windows
gleaming with wool socks,
tablecloths, all the retail
dreams of a week's long work;

before they passed (the factory
dreamers) you called to them
in tender terms:

"Look how good: made in America."
Princess dresses for girls
hard-soled boots for men
fruit of the loom oh! for every
Hungar.

In they trooped, Saturday to
Saturday, faithfully grew and needed
clothes; asked: "Mr.
Weiss, how is
Mrs. Weiss? Fine
I hope?" while you stood

back, center-aisle, to watch
their hands and the quiet lifting
of cloth onto bodies, knowing
the moment thought bloomed in the eyes
as mirrors assessed length
a customer would wriggle out, bring
the desired empty shape back
to you so you could

ring up: 1 for 59
2 for 1.52 3 for
5.63 nothing came for free "Mr.
Weiss, can you believe this total?"

or "Look at this little tear--
right along the seam, I know, but
won't you give me off
for damage?"

At night, at home, you'd
change into your baggy pants
and go into the dark
large silent garden;

there in the expanse, alone,
would you bend again, touch
the gleaming white heads
of bulbs in rows.



Cheryl Brown