

## "The Thawing"

Kristen Falso-Capaldi

For a moment, they were two children. They built a snowman together, laughing and play-fighting, arming themselves with snowballs and tree branches. It was fun, and she worshipped him.

"But not enough," he said. His eyes grew cold, like stones. "Not enough to go though with it." He said it was her duty as his girlfriend. The snowman is still frozen there; the air around it whips icy.

She didn't go to school that day. "You deserted me. Us."

"You've got to tell them," her best friend told her.

"I can't."

"It's your duty, your obligation!"

"I love--d him."

"You could stop it."

She dialed the number. Hung up. Dialed. Hung up.

Dialed.

She saved them all. All except one. The police shot him before he could fire the gun. All the time, she stares out the window at the snowman. She knows the thawing is coming. She anticipates it. And she dreads it.

