

# If I Were a Chemist, Not Now, but Maybe In The 1920s

*by* Cheryl Anne Gardner

She said, "I think I'm pregnant," but I thought that the sidewalk looked cleaner than usual, not so many cigarette butts and only a few of those plastic water bottles stuck in the storm drain grate. It was a sunny day but there was snow, in the sky, and on the ground. It was over her, and under her, and soft on her face, the wind whipping it in storm circles, coating the sharp surfaces around us. We'd been here before, walking and talking, like we do, like we did, back when we didn't think about things, didn't calculate distances, or arrival times, or ponder when places would open and close and if people we didn't know would have what we thought we were looking for. We'd been here before. When a walk in the snow was just a walk in the snow. She said, "The snow looks dirty," and all I could think of was my loose shoelace and benzalkonium chloride.

