

To Build a Fire

by Larry Strattner

One frozen hand protruded from the snow. Encased in a blue winter glove the hand's rigid fingers curled slightly as if seeking to grasp some final something. Huge blowing white flakes swirled, covering the rest of the body.

She had begged him not to go. He laughed her off saying, "I'll be fine. It's nothing." But he had been mistaken. Within ten steps he had been disoriented and in twelve lost in the maelstrom. As the killing cold seeped into him he remembered the heat and fierceness of their last embrace.

Too late he heeded her warning and turned toward home. Too late as the blizzard trapped him; blew him down; turned his very breath to ice.

Before him, at the end of the driveway, the snow blower continued to run. He reached out only to fall short as a dark, hulking man, coffee in a go-cup, drove past in a huge yellow truck plowing shut the driveway and burying the last of his clutching hand.

