



## Guilty

By Reese Rinas-Blais

It started at work. The graze of a hand, or a compliment under the breath. Then it became something outside of work hours. A drive home or a home-made dinner. Then it started getting uncomfortable. Then it became “I don’t want to do this.” Suddenly it became very angry. It started at work again. The graze of a hand or an insult under the breath. Am I the only one seeing this? Then it became harassing phone calls, cruel text messages, twisted mind games, manipulations, and abusive remarks. Then there was the strength to tell HR. Then HR

said, "You'll just have to get over it." Then there was regret I said anything. Then it became gossip. Then it became my fault. My fault I didn't block, my fault I didn't quit, my fault I didn't ask for help, my fault they didn't believe me, my fault I was so naive, my fault I didn't see it coming, my fault I was eighteen and he was twenty-five. Then it became my thoughts. It became every other word out of my mouth, my nightmares, my anxiety, my music, my clothes, the air I would breathe, my entire life. It wouldn't go away. Maybe this is all my fault. I didn't know it would turn out this way, I swear I didn't. I was so alone, and he was there. How do you tell a bright-eyed child that most people are bad? But it's my fault for falling in the trap.