



## CLAIRE BECKETT



*Kathryn on her first day as a niqabi, 2012*

When this picture was made, Kathryn, a young American woman, was a relatively new Muslim convert, and she had recently moved to Boston. Kathryn was trying to establish her reputation in the mosque community as a virtuous, moral, kind, upstanding Muslim. This, she explained to me, was made difficult for her as a young, single woman because (1) she had no Muslim family to vouch for her good character, and (2) despite her efforts to rebuff their advances, young men at the mosque were constantly flirting with her. Even though Kathryn didn't respond, all this flirting was making her look bad, and Kathryn worried that she would end up ruining her good name and having a difficult time finding a husband. Kathryn's solution? She decided to start wearing the niqab, or face veil, to demonstrate her religiosity. Kathryn posed for this photograph in the garden behind the mosque on her first day as a niqabi. The result? At first the way she'd tied the niqab made it very difficult for Kathryn to get food in her mouth, so she couldn't really eat in public. And despite all that cover, the guys still noticed her.