

# WELCOME TO NEWTON, IOWA

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FOR MELISA GREGORY

First, there is no correct way to live inside Iowa's late-winter mouth. By now everyone has met a friend of the wind—even the middle school kids gathered like matchsticks in the lots of the Arby's & the old Dairy Queen to pass bruised soccer balls, smuggled cigarettes already three-quarters smoked. This break in the pavement—the result of snow covering the cheeks of roads and fields until its third day on ground, when more falls & the world as we know it is laid to rest. How do I explain what it is to live expecting the dirt to stay beneath me—that no approaching tragedy will hint its arrival, not for God nor the glory of spring crop come early? Beautiful, this is March in Iowa. March, when the earth strokes its children only to plant them back inside the clouds. We must remember nothing is ever completely our own: not snow, not March, not body, not God.