

## Still Life

So the new cemetery's  
    out of bounds,  
        entrance draped

with a candystripe helix  
    of incident tape,  
        chain and padlock

wreathing the gate.  
    We'll edge past  
        on a path that slaloms

the hawthorn hedge,  
    exchange stares  
        with the astronaut

in a hazmat suit  
    and visor and mask  
        and over-shoes

and white leather gloves,  
    propped on his spade  
        at an open grave.

The universe  
    breathless and  
        muggy tonight,

a cold-blooded moon,  
    marooned villages  
        under the hill,

a stagnant dusk  
    that parts to allow  
        an ambulance through.

Simon Armitage