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# In a Country Churchyard

Aidan Rooney

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## In a Country Churchyard

Aidan Rooney

We want him to go out on a high note,  
said the gravedigger's eldest son, himself  
a gravedigger. He stood back from the edge,  
his right foot on the left lug of a spade.  
White orchids soothed the rug of manmade grass  
rolled out over planks laid across the space.

His father sat fornenst the opened plot,  
on a stone wall the sun going down lit up.  
It shone on the flowers and warmed the father,  
his good cap doffed, his head inclined in rest.  
He'd dug for everyone in the graveyard,  
Mad Dog even, and the Hunger Strikers.

We haven't told him yet, the son disclosed,  
but will when all the fuss is over.  
His father's hair, as the poet's used to, glowed  
in a sudden, sideways burst of sunshine.  
Magnesium burning. And would not let up  
no matter the light. Or the light dying.

After tea, the son drove in the digger,  
its link-box raised, then tipped, to fill the hole  
with shingle scooped from the shore of Lough Neagh.  
It fell like the wall of a waterfall.  
He watched his father through its thinning veil  
get up to get the shovel and the rake.