Cochise
Brett Bodemer

On the way to Tombstone
I stop at Cochise.
Not the town, but
The cemetery, a rectangle

Carved from scrub, perpendicular
To the asphalt rectangle
Of highway—joined
By an isthmus of old planks.

The dirt lane and parking lot are one.
A padlock hangs from the chain-link fence,
Itself a break in the corral
Of barbed wire three lines high.

I hoist myself over the gateposts
Which move under the wind's weight
More than under my own. The baffle
At my ears is incessant.

At my shoes: stony, thorny, earth. No
Mausoleums here. The highest headstone
Scales to my knees, one of but three
In marble. Many markers are blocks

Of cement, dateless names gouged in.
Others are small tin plates nailed
To spindly metal posts hammered into
The stiff ground, names gone. Cochise

Cemetery. Its largest structure:
On a wooden platform, water drum
crowned by spinning
wind-vanes.

There's no one here but me, in this
Space longer than it is wide, corners
At ninety degrees, sustained
By the Cochise Volunteers.

A tumbleweed bounds over my head,
Leaps the barbed wire, vanishes.
An oncoming alley of dust
Drives me back to my car.

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Brett Bodemer was born and raised in Seattle. He studied poetry with Belle Randall and Stephen Thomas. He has read at the OK Hotel, Open Books, and Red Sky. His work has appeared in Frogpond, The Lilliput Review, Iota, and Orbis.