

## OF BLOOD AND WATER

For seventy years,  
five English places  
he had called home;

but within his hybrid blood  
flowed secret rivers - *Vltava*  
*Ehre, Labe, Morava* –

names he could barely  
pronounce but ingested  
in childhood – those Sundays

his father and uncle met,  
and goose-fat dumplings with  
sweet-vinegared cabbage

evoked their birth-language;  
and he, an uncomprehending  
ghost, sensed their sadness,

wondering if they wanted  
to return home to Prague,  
in search of their mother,

lost in the Holocaust. They never did.  
Years later, he stepped off  
the train there, walking to find

the city's New Jewish Cemetery  
and the fallen family gravestone  
hidden beneath sprawling ivy.

He fetched water, let it flow  
like a river washing clean  
a century's legacy of dirt

as he whispered *Vltava*,  
*Ehre, Labe, Morava* - until  
his name at last appeared.