

Running In My Veins

by Jerry Ratch

I went to Prague recently to visit my family's castle.

And they say that inside the veins of every Bohemian
lies an entire army of dead alcoholics.

I suppose this is true of me too.

I have at times felt them overrunning the topsoil
of my own personal demons, even though
my father had the iron will to drink only
one glass of deep red Mogen David wine
with the yellow eye of an egg yolk
staring out at him like the evil eye,
warning him of what always lay ahead
if only he would cut loose.

But he never did. He had a Russian's iron will,
for it was the Russians who rode into Bohemia
on horseback and swooped up his own drunken father
into the Czar's wicked army.

Every family castle is a let-down, I think.
Kind of claustrophobic,
the dungeon poorly lit and dank.
Makes you go inside and shut down,
quit thinking, sort of like meditating.

Too much history kind of makes you
thirsty for blood, hungry for booze
and duck and cabbage, raw whiskey
in the throat, and maybe, yes
even pissing in the sink.

