

JEREMY GRANT

**Leave-Taking**

*Ultimatum to Germany  
expiring at twelve.  
Waiting anxiously  
till morning for result.*

*May God help us all  
in our hour of need  
and remember and comfort  
the widow and the fatherless.*

*These notes are written  
at request of my wife  
in case I should be called  
to defend my country.*

To her I leave the condensation welling at the windows.  
To her I leave a muddy footprint on the doorstep.  
To her I leave the walk to the mill past snorting paddocks.  
To her I leave the quiet percussion of a bicycle.

To her I leave an empty tin of moustache wax.  
To her I leave hand-me-downs waiting in a bottom drawer.  
To her I leave a symphony of plumbing.  
To her I leave arthritis budding in her fingers.

To her I leave all the softnesses of morning.  
To her I leave a puff of flour from the kitchen table.  
To her I leave an argument still ringing in the air.  
To her I leave the hardness of the pew on Sundays.

To her I leave my best suit hanging in the wardrobe.

To her I leave a candle blown out at bedtime.

To her I leave the shapelessness of my voice.

To her I leave the absence of a harelip kiss.

**Jeremy Grant** lives in Leicestershire, England, with his wife and son. His poems have appeared in *Smiths Knoll*, *Poetry Nottingham*, *The French Literary Review*, *The Journal*, *The Emma Press Anthology of Fatherhood*, *Anima*, *Magma*, and *The Coffee House*. The epigraph of 'Leave-Taking' is taken from the notebook of his great-grandfather, Percy Millard.