

# Endless White Lines



*What we know not now*

*We shall know after*  
says the inscription on the tomb  
of 1760 Irish Rifleman, Hugh Catherwood  
He died in Wimereux  
4 August 1917 alongside  
*Darling Ted*, 10035  
Private E Elliot of the 3rd Hussars  
As I side-step the endless  
straight white line  
I whisper the written words that hold  
the heft and bear the weight of your lives

You, 43704 A G Botting Of the Royal Field Artillery Who *fought the Good*  
*Fight* You, Lt F. T.L. Abbiss who  
*Cheerfully gave up your life*  
You, 1859 R.H. Dobinson Of the Yorkshire Regiment  
*Remembered by your wife*  
*brother, sister and five children*

After a while, the white line curdles  
Into a curl and my stomach  
rises to splay its wares  
At the back of my throat  
My eyes sting and hurt but  
not from gas or trench warfare.

Here lie three thousand white tombs from Yorkshire, Wales,  
the Scottish Border, Ireland,  
Australia, Montreal, Saskatchewan  
Too many young men to mention

Like you, 3633 Private J Bloomer  
Of the Black Watch

And You, 9599 G.H. Aldridge Of The Queen's Artillery  
whose family prayer that  
*Peace her sway extend*  
*And Britain's power depend*

*On war no more  
Bore no fruit*

And, yes, you, 12365 Walter Lawrence Pratt  
Of The King's Liverpool.

***Kate Ennals***, from Cavan, is a board member of Irish PEN/PEN na h-Éireann. Her poetry collections *At the Edge and Threads* were published by Lapwing. Her latest collection *Elsewhere* can be purchased [here](#). Another collection, *Practically a Wake*, is due to be published in Spring 2023.