



Many girls white linen

no mist no mystery
no hanging rock only

many girls white linen
men with guns and
harsher things white women
amongst gums white linen
starch'er things later plaques
will mark this war
nails peeling back floor
scrubbing back blak chores
white luxe hangnails hanging
more than nails while
no palm glowing paler

later plaques will mark
this sick linen's rotten
cotton genes later plaques
will track the try
to bleed lineage dry

its banks now flood

a new ancestor, Ordeal,
plaits this our blood

if evil is banal
how more boring is
suffering evil two bloodlines
from it how more
raw rousing horrifying is
the plaque that marks
something else rolling on
from this place a
roll of white linen
dropped on slight incline
amongst gums collecting grit
where blak girls hang
nails hang out picking
them hangnails



Blakwork

Alison Whittaker,
Magabala Books, 2018

'*Many girls white linen*' is a poem in Alison Whittaker's second book, *Blakwork*, which reviewer Karen Wyld (*Books + Publishing*) has described as 'a bold mix of poetry, micro-fiction, memoir and critique'. Whittaker 'bravely unpacks themes such as colonisation and Aboriginal rights in Australia'.