

South and North – 2 Poems by Dave Feickert inspired by NZ

1. Erewhon

Cricket on the green,
Players gathering-in the twilight,
Majestic hills and mountains
Looping the crystal clear water lake.

Archiac, the tallest, commanding
The Valley head, centurion-like
Among his men, ready to repel
The dark forces of Lord of the Rings¹

Water birds, waking minutes after the
Garbling magpies; flying off
In small groups purposefully;
Trout, rainbow and brown swim free.

The land itself, grass-browned
In summer drought, except
For the patches of green fodder crops;
Yet scarcely a single Polynesian tree
Remains.

Poplars, pines, willows, silver birch –
But no trace of what went before
The Clearances for the sheep
England-bound from Erewhon.²

¹ Edoras and Helms Deep and the Misty Mountains scenes in the Lord of the Rings trilogy were filmed here

² Erewhon was the utopian community in Samuel Butler's famous novel of the same name. Butler lived at Mesopotamia, in a huge river valley with the view towards the mountains, where Erewhon sheep and deer station now lies.

2. Whanganui

Te Awa looping from the wild coast
Through green hills,
Some slipping bare towards the sea,
Others clothed in luxuriant forest.

Pohutukawa on the coast through
Manuka, totara and tall kahikatea;
Allowing into their midst, river willow
And profitable pine grouped in cities.

Somehow grafted together
In the peoples of the town:
Tangata Whenua and European
On the threshold of the new.

Negotiating the future
From both the imagination
And the terrible past
Of blood, sweat and tears.

Making love and mixing;
The real and the imaginary
In the Region; a glimpse
Of North and South, Somewhere
Reunited.

Dave Feickert

Saturday 9 February 2008, written on the bench looking towards Mt Archiac, at
Lake Clearwater, Canterbury, NZ.