If the sky knew half of what we’re doing down here it would be stricken, inconsolable, and we would have nothing but rain.

The Way Is Is

That you love nature is easy to say until you learn that unless you act accordingly it will call you to account in the end. That’s why we’re required to make the connection between the sound the wind makes when it starts the leaves quivering and the way the white canes of sunlight line the spaces between the trees on a summer’s morning.

It’s a case of working out what’s here for the long haul and if we want to be part of it. It’s marvellous, abominable, confusing, exultant: the way things are, the way is is.

This is the poetry of Brian Turner

Brian is a poet and environmental activist. He was formerly the Poet Laureate of New Zealand. A collection of his poetry about the beauty of the Central Otago region in New Zealand where he lives has recently been published in the book Elemental. His poem Sky was included in a body of writing called Moral Ground – Ethical Action for a Planet in Peril.
West Over the Maniototo

The pathos of absence is eloquent here where who preceded whom matters less than where they came from, what they did, and why; matters less than questions like whether it makes sense to revere place or repeat practice, and whether superseded is only another soulless name for disregard.

In fact, few lived here, ever; most passed through en route to parts hardly known. Stone was hewn, moa slaughtered, grasslands burnt – as everywhere else – except it all took more time and effort then, a different sort of know-how, but with little evidence of a hunger for conspicuous wealth. All in the name of progress, of course. You could ask if this landscape invites reflection or is such purely a function of individual sensibilities? And could it be that here the imagination’s married to humility that’s free to roam in realms stripped of the pomp of narrow perspectives, and foreignness is what we cannot find within ourselves?