his handling of the competing demands of political fame and family life. Yet here, again, the most insightful and understanding sources remain largely muted.

The harm that may come from this book is only in part that some may take it seriously. The real danger is that those who see it for what it is may as a result take George Manuel less seriously than he deserves.

*The University of British Columbia* PAUL TENNANT

***Out of the Interior: The Lost Country***, by Harold Rhenisch. Vancouver: Cacanadadada Press, 1993. 208 pp. $12.95 paper.

This collection of poem-stories from the Okanagan maintains a thesis apparently contradictory to its local and personal colour: "There is only one history." Harold Rhenisch, compiler of *Six Poets of British Columbia* (1980), and author of four previous collections of poems, claims that history must be written as global and that each human is implicated in the life of each other living thing. Hence the obvious if unpredictable intertext (Isak Dinesen's *Out of Africa* 1938) and its subtle direction to read the political economy of Kenyan coffee plantations against the colonialism of a Keremeos orchard. Hence the linking of the economies of Coast and Interior, of the cultures of Germany and Canada, of the disciplines of war and apple-growing, of the ecologies of orchard and ocean, of the circulation systems of tractors and trees, of the syntax of Canada and the United States.

But, as this web of connections implies, Rhenisch speaks frequently about history just because he distrusts history of the textbook variety, with its continuum of predictable cause and effect. His history dances out of his own interior, shaped by the fluid archives of memory and feeling. In part, the book is Rhenisch's autobiography, a memoir of days young and easy under the apple boughs, and of following his father out of grace.

Ordered in nine sections carrying grandly abstract titles, the story line follows the tragedy of his father's lost dream of a new Eden in the Okanagan. But these "chapters" are composed of short short stories or prose poems; (some of only a few sentences/most one to three pages) with more specific and shifting titles and focuses. Some stories apparently transcribe directly the anecdotes (repeated over coffee cups and

beer bottles) which make up the Okanagan's literature. Another "story" consists entirely of a *list* of the machines, large and small, essential to the art of apple-farming.

Hence there are many forms and at least two levels of history budding in this book. One is the satisfying detail of the orchard economy, a subject little written into British Columbia literature. The other is the lyric of compounds and mixed metaphors and variations of light that write history as verbal impressionism. This level of meaning is subtly but insistently associated with the poet's mother, otherwise barely visible in the story of a son's struggle with and against father. History, then, is built of "unknown land" and "survive[s] . . . [here] in unfinished, unassimilated and unorchestrated forms."

In a piece titled "Waiting for the Women," Rhenisch remembers the return of the robins to the orchards each spring, the season "when the sun was made of water." The windfall of apples, "white-fleshed, red-skinned, perfectly preserved under the snow," suddenly thawed "in the new yellow sunlight." He recalls the male robins drunk on the "bubbling and fermenting" remnants of a previous season's harvest. Suddenly, he ends the piece . . . that is, he opens up the closure, with this discovery: "Then the females would flare back and it would be spring, and the light would look like it was pressed out of sap." The audacious choice of the verb "flare" is just right to suggest the suppressed adolescent sexuality (and its implicit warning) in the experience. Meanwhile, the cumulative syntax, based on a series of "and-" clauses, counters the poetic flare with a vernacular deliberateness. Consistent with the most persistent image-pattern in the book, the discovery turns on a metaphor of light ("would look like it was pressed out of sap"). This at once plodding and perceptive simile evokes surely the harvest when cider is pressed from the ripe apples, but now he imagines *pressing* the sap itself, the life blood of the tree itself, to find its essence.

This bit of comment has, in one sense, little place in a review of a biography and autobiography in a journal whose roots are in B.C. history. But it seems to me crucial to get at the kind of history which Rhenisch is after: it is history as filtered through the bewilderment of a child; it is history apprehended rather than *understood*: often, when thought is lost (p. 93) or "there was nothing to think about," the evident but intangible light illuminates an obscured history. Mixed metaphors of light write a way to an overlapping, compounded, multisensory history. Maybe that's how you get at a history that doesn't make sense:

> Today it is less of a world, and its people, true to themselves and their place, and their history of trapping, ranching and Empire, are out of place — denied the very time in which they live. Time here is an old time. It once prevailed throughout British Columbia, but is now found only in silted mountain pockets.

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***Houses for All: The Struggle for Social Housing in Vancouver, 1919-50,*** by Jill Wade. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1994. xiv, 250 pp. $24.95 paper; $45.95 cloth.

Jill Wade ably demonstrates the validity of her closing sentence: "the history of housing activism in Vancouver is one to remember and celebrate." For, in a text which is readable and urbane yet packed as tightly with information as people were in the 1940s Vancouver housing stock, she reconstructs a highly instructive local history that reprises a significant episode in post-war transatlantic culture. The weft and weave of volunteer, professional and municipal, provincial and federal organizations that she deftly discloses and reconnects add considerably to the literature on regional Canadian politics from the Armistice to the Korean War, as it does to that on urban geography, sociology, and architectural history. In particular, Wade's socio-political explication of public housing developments on the west coast compares with N. Glendinning and S. Mathesius's broader study of the British high rise public housing published in 1994.

Wade also deserves plaudits for insisting on the primacy of detailed information upon which she presents reliable analyses and convincing historical interpretation. She draws upon a comprehensive range of sources from national, provincial, and city archives, nicely balanced by the more vital if diffuse record of journalistic report and individual reminiscence. Thus she corrects such entrenched conventional wisdom as D. Holdsworth's romanticized picture of Vancouver housing; which was largely derived, in company with much other architectural historical writing, from scrutiny of middle or upper class conditions. Not far from the Garden Suburb, Queen Anne-cum-Arts and Crafts structure of the west side lay a rickety and, thanks to the Depression, increasingly deprived fabric of tenements, boarding houses, cabins, shacks, and even hobo-camps. Their spectral presence in the urban