



POETRY



INDIGENOUS  
INTERNATIONALISMS

SPECIAL SECTION



*This poem is part of the  
Special Section: Honouring  
Indigenous Land and Water  
Defenders, edited by Jeff  
Ganohalidoh Corntassel.*

## Unsold and Indivisible

Jess Háust'i

### About the Art

Jess is interested in how poetry as a form and the natural world as a space of images and relationships can give shape to human identity and experience. They explore this through storytelling practices that bridge Indigenous feminism, kincentric ecology, and the links between body sovereignty and land sovereignty. Jess thrives in the belief that place-based identities and Indigenous knowledge systems ground us in embodied ancestral wisdom and connectedness that empower us to steward and defend our motherlands with the same love and care we would employ in tending to a loved one; this belief is core to their practice of writing and organizing.

### About the Artist

**Jess Háust'i** is a parent, writer, and land-based educator from the Háitzaqv (Heiltsuk) Nation in Bella Bella. They live and work in their unceded ancestral homelands where they focus their practice on community building, food sovereignty, and Indigenous culture and language resurgence. They serve their community and region as Executive Director of Qqs Projects Society and Lead at Coastal Foodways, and support decolonial philanthropy as Co-Lead at Right Relations Collaborative. Jess is the author of *Crushed Wild Mint*, a debut poetry collection from Nightwood Editions (2023), and a collection of essays forthcoming from Magic Canoe Press in 2024.

For more information, visit <https://www.jesshousty.com/>

### Unsold

Understand when I tell you  
that I do not want your fucking money.

Money is a weapon  
that white men wield  
to feel powerful

and I do not aspire to be a white man.

Look around me;  
I am rich.

Count the salmon scales  
stuck to my skin  
as I prepare the smokehouse,

the little feathers caught in my hair  
as I work on geese,

the footsteps of all the dances to come  
when the deer that feeds me  
also gives me rattles for my apron  
and all of the grace contained  
in its hooves.

There is no generosity in money.

What you call a resistance movement  
is not about resistance at all;

it's about utter, joyful  
submission  
to the wisdom of the higher laws  
that guide me.

You got the movement part right, though.

Those deer hoof rattles  
urge a brown kid to dance.



## Indivisible

Sometimes we pull down the mountains;  
sometimes we lift the edge of the sea.  
However we transform what surrounds us,  
you are welcome here.

This land is your body,  
your shapeshifting body, soft and malleable  
as the blackest of good earth.

This is what I teach my children:  
your body is a creation story  
unfolding into a motherland,  
into a government,

into futurity.

First we stand in awe, and then we love it,  
and then we protect it: your body and the land,  
the land and your body,  
your fingers that learn to pick the tender nettle  
without being stung and your shoulders set  
against the wind that causes all the birds  
to congregate at the shoreline, trembling  
with joy.

You are updraft, root, stars;  
you are branches and waves;  
you are prayer and flood and power.

This is what I teach my children:  
how to hold the land like a loved one  
against your breast, how to render yourself  
indivisible from what sustains you -  
your flourishing only and always mutual.

There is a motherland waiting for you,  
surrounding you, holding you.  
There is a motherland and it is your body,  
and it holds you,

it holds you, it unbraids you until you stand  
in the fullness of your power.

