Ode to Madeline Deighton

T'uy't'tanat-Cease Wyss [A Skwxwu7mesh Slanay]

Gassy Jack had a love For Coast Salish Ladies His first wife A native gal from New Westminster [The Q'ayq'ay't people] She moved to Vancouver with Jack by canoe they paddled the Stau:Lo [the Fraser River] to edge of the Salish Sea Slightly north round the bend, to a place known as Luq'luq'i Her cousin did paddle them to The shores of the village of Kum'kum'a'lay In the early days of Vancouver at the edge of Luq'luq'i "the Grove of beautiful maple trees" became a drinking dive Kum'kum'a'lay, a village of many good folk Pushed farther North, and South and East and West Making way for a new port A new city being born No place for native villages Nor for the beautiful maple trees either Who gave of their beauty To inspire the name to which these shores Were known for time Immemorial

A forest Becoming a town A town filled with taverns The best business to start was to serve to the people drinks and fill the streets with drunks Gassy Jack Who was said to have been "Armed with a barrel of whiskey and a sly tongue" A talkative man who Loved to share a drink With whomever had an ear. A Steamship Captain First Turned Saloon Proprietor By way of his love for mixing booze & stories Money was not his goal Nor his ambition Sharing stories Drinking whiskey That was his desire A visionary? Maybe A hopeless drunk? More likely His first wife, fell ill Early in their new home In the newly built Deighton Hotel From her deathbed She did arrange For her niece A young Skwxwu7mesh girl of 12 years To wed Jack

Young Madeline

[The government name she was assigned]

Was promised to a man

A Man of 40 years

A grown man

Could have been

Her father

Giving birth to young Richard

Young Madeline did

At the age of 13 years

"The Young Earl of Granville"

As he was known

In his very short life

For He only lived to be 4 years

and he never knew

What it meant to become a grown man

Madeline Deighton

Was who she became known as

In Vancouver's history books

Her English name was Madeline Deighton

"The Former Mayor of Gastown"

She did wed

Kw'exiliya—Kwa-ch-all-ee-a Qua-Hail-Ya Kwe'xiliya

It was hard for illiterate English folks to speak

our Sacred SnichemOur ancientComplex LanguageEven todayVancouverites are terrified to speak the words

The first human words that were spoken

In this land of oceans and cloudy skies

And endless shorelines and wetlands

The idea of being so scared

of something so sacred Resonates in my Modern Indigenous Brain Thinking about how many of my people have been accused of being Illiterate themselves Unable to say English words Simply because

Their first words were spoken in their

Indigenous Languages

Madeline Deighton

At the age of 15 years

Left Gassy Jack

She stood up for her Culture

Her People

Her Spirit

A man who owned the streets of a small city

Sold booze to the patrons of his saloons

A man respected by many

And undermined by a few

She chose to walk away from that life

The boozing

The wild parties

The lack of respect by the newcomers

Towards her People

The lack of Rights by her People

To know and

Understand what she did then

It is phenomenal

Madeline

was 12 years old when she was wed

To Jack

Through an arranged marriage by her Aunt

By the time she was 15 years old

She had left Gassy Jack Deighton

By Vancouver historical records she was

By Skwxwu7mesh records

A Woman Disinherited She was a Powerful Woman

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She left him

Wild lifestyle of her husband

because all the boozing and the

Which was, by her view

The very element that

would destroy

Her people

And her Culture.

Young Madeline knew

Then

what our people know today

That our Culture

and our Spirituality

Can neither be

Bought Nor Sold