

ANZALDÚA, GLORIA (1942–2004)

“I ...being different, the class thing, being a little Chicanita, the gender thing, the race thing, the family, my father’s death, just seeing what death and pain are like were motivations for me to write.” Gloria Anzaldúa. *Latinas in the United States: A Historical Encyclopedia*.

Victim of a rare illness and resultant physical imbalances caused Anzaldúa to stop growing at the age of twelve, but this did not stop her from developing a passion for writing. Prominent as a recurring theme in her work was injustice against women, and in 1974 she wrote poetry and one of her first essays was titled, “Growing Up Chicana.” A Chicana lesbian and feminist, her greatest contribution was *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, the book she co-edited with Cherrie Moraga. Published in 1981, the volume delves into the unique social, cultural, and political intersections of Chicana feminism. A second publication, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, established her foundational credentials in women’s and Chicana studies. In 1990, a sequel to *Bridge* titled *Making Face, Making Soul/Haciendo Caras* was published. Anzaldúa’s intentions were to give younger Chicanas a sense of continuity in the Chicana feminist and queer experience. Anzaldúa’s publication, *This Bridge Called Home: Radical Visions for Transformation*, would be her last. On May 15, 2004, Anzaldúa died at her Santa Cruz home from complications due to diabetes.