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. Anzaldua'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.