



“Write with your eyes like painters, with your ears like musicians, with your feet like dancers. You are the truthsayer with quill and torch. Write with your tongues of fire. Don’t let the pen banish you from yourself.”

G L O R I A

A N Z A L D U A

Who Was Gloria?



Gloria Evangelina Anzaldúa (September 26, 1942-May 15, 2004) was a queer Chicana poet, writer, feminist theorist, and activist who wasn't afraid to use her writing to tackle all her experiences as a queer woman of color who grew up on the U.S. Mexico border.

Highly Accomplished

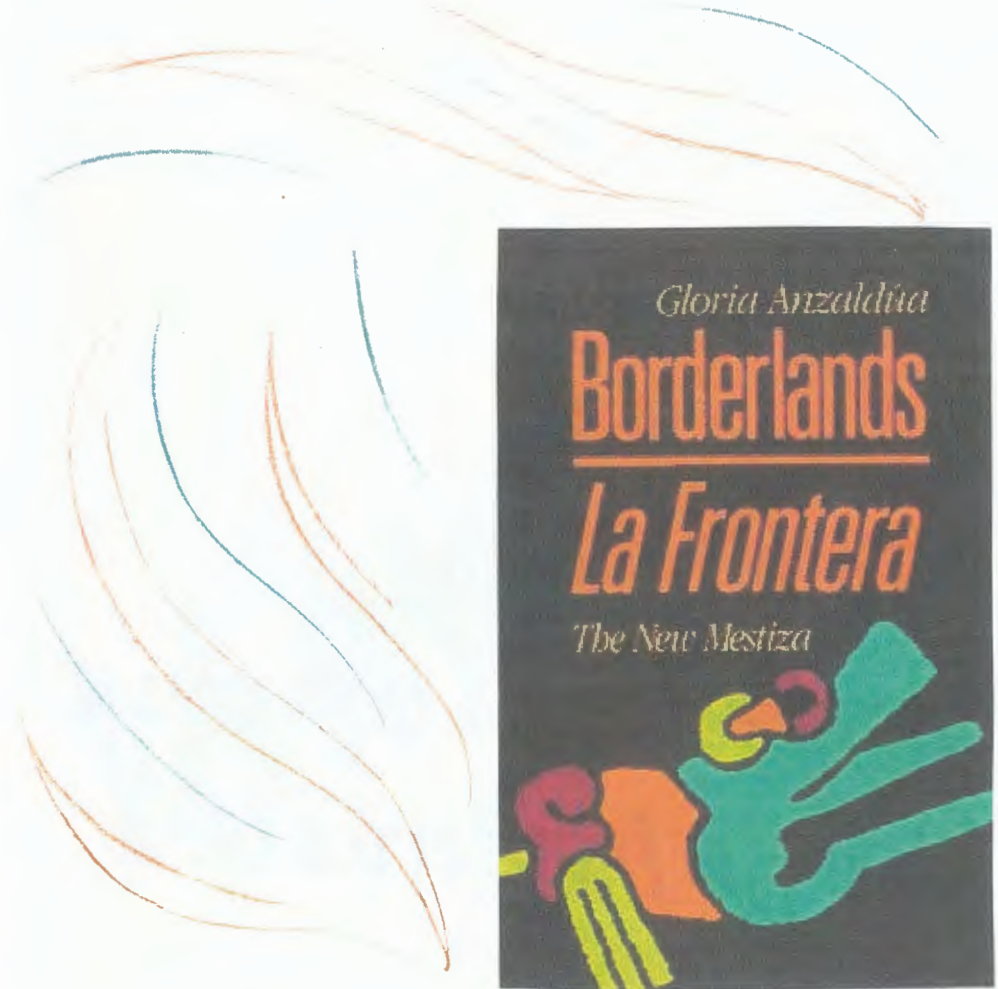
Q: How many awards and honors has Gloria Anzaldúa received? A:

1. 1986- Before Columbus Foundation American Book Award for *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*
2. 1991- Lambda Lesbian Small Book Press Award
3. 1991- Lesbian Rights Award
4. 1991- National Endowment for the Arts Fiction Award
5. 1992- Sappho Award of Distinction
6. 2001- American Studies Association Lifetime Achievement Award
7. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*: one of the 38 best books of 1987 by *Library Journal*
8. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*: one of 100 Best Books of the Century by *Hungry Mind Review*
9. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*: one of 100 Best Books of the Century by *Utne Reader*.
10. 2012- named one of the 31 Icons of the LGBT History Month by *Equality Forum*

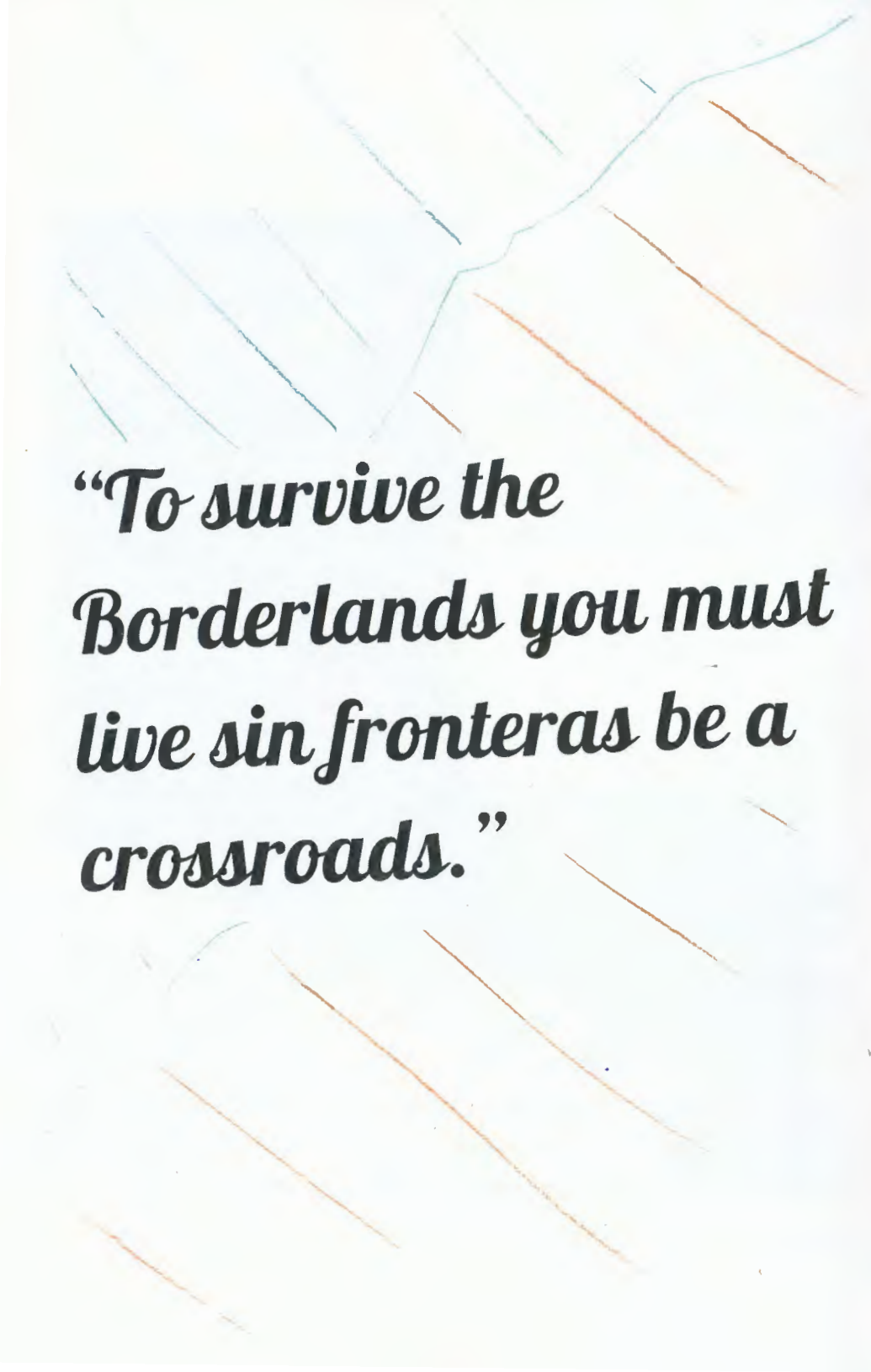


Borderlands

Anzaldúa had a variety of major themes in her work which she drew from her life experiences. One for which she may be most well known is border culture. Anzaldúa grew up in the Rio Grande Valley in Texas--the borderlands.



One of her most famous works is *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* which delves into the experience of living on a border, as well as the metaphorical borders which follow Latina/o/x people in the United States. Anzaldúa's mixture of prose and poetry in this book details border effects in such a way that brought her critical acclaim and helped to tell the experiences of Latina/o/x people in the United States who experience being the Other in their lives every day



*“To survive the
Borderlands you must
live sin fronteras be a
crossroads.”*



LA MEZCLA

Anzaldúa describes the Borderlands as being most affected by la mezcla (hybridity) of both United States and Mexico, but also neither fully one or the other. She describes the “new mestiza” as being beyond any binary conception-and intersectional identity

“Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish us from them. A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition. The prohibited and forbidden are its inhabitants.”

BILINGUALISM



Anzaldúa used bilingualism extensively in her writing as a part of her intersectional identity and a way to represent it: "Wild tongues can't be tamed, they can only be cut out." Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza

"Until I am free to write bilingually and to switch codes without having always to translate, while I still have to speak English or Spanish when I would rather speak Spanglish, and as long as I have to accommodate the English speakers rather than having them accommodate me, my tongue will be illegitimate. I will no longer be made to feel ashamed of existing. I will have my voice: Indian, Spanish, white. I will have my serpent's tongue - my woman's voice, my sexual voice, my poet's voice. I will overcome the tradition of silence."

Queer POC



Another major theme in Gloria Anzaldúa's writing is sexuality--as a queer chicana woman, she wrote extensively about the pressures and oppression she felt. She did not feel as though she fit one label in terms of her sexuality, just as she felt about living on a border (both metaphorical and physical). Anzaldúa described herself as having a "multisexuality" and wrote a lot about the marginalization of queer people, especially in communities of color.

Chicana



Feminist

“A woman who writes has power, and a woman with power is feared.”

Anzaldúa was a Chicana Feminist. This is yet another aspect of her identity which she wrote about--particularly the oppression she felt from patriarchal Chicano culture and sense of masculinity.

Pluriversality

Pluriversality (having multiple ways of being in the world) is a major theme in Anzaldúa's work in multiple ways. She writes about her many and often conflicting ways of being in the world as a Latinx LGBTQ+ woman in the United States. She often wrote about how she felt that she didn't fully belong to one culture, race, or sexuality.



LIVED

Anzaldúa's work is a very educational form of Latin@ Vernacular Discourse-generating knowledge about how Latin@ people empower and affirm themselves through discourse- because of her focus on intersectionality and her personal experiences.

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“We’re afraid the others will think we’re agringadas because we don’t speak Chicano Spanish. We oppress each other trying to out-Chicano each other, vying to be “real” Chicanas, to speak like Chicanos. There is no one Chicano language just as there is no one Chicano experience.”*

* agringada- acts or behaves like a gringo, a foreigner.

Influencer

Gloria Anzaldúa's work is so important because it is an autoethnography describing her experiences that anyone can learn a lot from.



LEGACY

After her death in 2004, Anzaldúa's legacy lives on through her work and through awards, grants, scholarships, and her continuing impact on poetry, academia, and culture.



What did you learn about Gloria Anzaldúa that appeals to you most?

A large, empty rectangular area with a light blue border, intended for a student's response to the question above.