

Walking a tightrope

Gloria Anzaldúa walks a tightrope suspended between white and Chicana cultures

by Marilyn Davis

Gloria Anzaldúa is probably best known among lesbians as the co-editor (with Cherrie Moraga) of *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, published in 1981 by Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press. She is also the author of *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, published in 1987 by Spinster/Aunt Lute, and chosen as one of the 38 best books of 1987 by the Library Journal. Most recently she has edited *Haciendo Caras: Making Face, Making Soul* (Aunt Lute Foundation, 1990), an anthology of creative pieces and theoretical essays by women of color which tackles issues of spiritual and cultural identity, racism, feminism, and multilingual, multi-ethnic literacy. Anzaldúa is also the narrator of *Prieta Has a Friend/Priettita tiene un amigo*, a bilingual children's book published in 1991 by Children's Book Press. In 1991 she was awarded a National Endowment for the Arts Grant in Fiction.

PROFILE



people away because of their racial fears and ignorances. They will come to see that they are not helping us but following our lead." In her Foreword to the Second Edition of *This Bridge Called My Back*, Anzaldúa says, "We have come to realize we are not alone in our struggles nor separate nor autonomous but that we—white black straight queer female male—are connected and interdependent. We are each accountable for what is happening down the street, south of the border or across the sea."

The topic of Anzaldúa's address at Portland State will be the need for multi-culturalism at the university. Anzaldúa is well acquainted with universities. She has taught Chicano Studies at the University of Texas, and Women's Studies at San Francisco State. She has also served as Chicana Artist in Residence in Chicano Studies at Pomona College in California. Currently she is enrolled in the doctoral program at U.Ca. Santa Cruz. Drawing on her experiences with "multiculturalism in the university," Anzaldúa says in *Borderlands*:

*I am the only round face,
Indian beaked, off-colored,
in the faculty lineup, the workshop, the panel
and reckless enough to take you on.*

Gloria Anzaldúa, Chicana tejana lesbian-feminist poet, fiction writer, teacher, healer, and cultural theorist, will speak at Portland State University in the Vanport Room on Tuesday, April 14, at 7 pm.

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