

**Anita of the Earth**

*by Laleanne Batao*

Anita was my friend. She held her chin up like a proud Sequoia Tree—strong, strange, beautiful. Her eyes showed the long years on the streets leading to the bar. Her hair was a stream of silk. Her voice, the wind that would take me to the spot beside her.

Anita was my friend. She was the waterfall I'd jump to without hesitation, and her smile was the sunset. Her heart was her most guarded secret – a mountain filled with trees and hidden treasures kept away from men.

Anita was my friend and I was the pagan who would glorify her. She gave me her abundant wisdom, and I would gladly succumb to her wishes. Anita was my friend. She was the sunshine and the flowers and the birds chirping. I was the poet who would watch her in awe.

Anita was my friend. She was the blue sky who succumbed to the storm's wrath and turned grey. Anita was my friend. She became the ocean drained. Anita was my friend. Now she is one with the earth.