
[Ecuador: A poem for the women of the mangroves](#)

(Photo: C-Condem)

The *décima* is a poetic form that has been used for many years as a tool of protest by Afro-Ecuadorians, who keep this cultural traditional alive while denouncing the trampling of their rights by greedy and powerful interests like the shrimp farming industry and others that are destroying the mangroves.

Linver Nazareno dedicates this *décima* to the women who live in the mangroves, as a tribute to the hard work they endure every day.

Mangrove Woman
by Linver Nazareno

Mangrove firewood is your coal
The seashell will wait for you
An oar is your rudder
Your dear friend, the mangrove
An open fire is your kitchen
Your children, your entertainment
The forest, your medicine
The shade, your protection
A good fish, your food
Chillangua [1], your seasoning
The mangrove, barrier of life
Protecting it is your reason
To obtain your food
Mangrove firewood, your coal
Skin weathered by hope
And by rising so early
Your mind gives you your strength
You will walk through the mud
Tobacco is your passion
Smoke to chase away the flies
The wind is your song
Tapao [2] is your feast
To nourish you
The seashell will wait for you
You heat up the lemon grass
Before breakfast
Your way of life is so simple
You work so hard
The sun is your faithful timekeeper

The waves, your heart
The moon is your calendar
Your gas, a sack of coal
To reach the estuary
An oar is your rudderSmoke from
burning coconut fibre
To chase the flies away
You have drained the milk from the
coconut
The tonga [3] must be prepared
My little mangrove tree
You have given me so much food
I have waged a thousand battles
When I go out to work
Life has gifted me with
My dear friend the mangrove