

MEXICAN SPITFIRE, 1940

Deborah Paredez

Lupe Velez is throwing cake
at the white girl, swearing
her spitfire curses —

*mas stupido mas animal
no me digas que no
cara de perro cara de pastel*

her rage a pratfall and propeller,
bottle rocket, crested wave
of flung trapeze, darting fish.

We can't keep our eyes
off Lupe's high wire act, her
shimmer finning the dark.

She's the circus we want
to join, shoal-mate in the deep
reaches of krilled blue.

She's silver-tongued, oil
slick and storm, her wrath
the parted sea, the flood,

wrath of deliverance,
wrath-mouth of the whale
and we're swallowed

whole.