

LADY OF THE PAVEMENTS, 1929

Deborah Paredez

Where is the song of songs for me?

Beautiful song of ecstasy...

—Irving Berlin, “Where is the Song of Songs for Me?”

Sung by Lupe Velez in *Lady of the Pavements* (1929)

I was born the same
year she starred as a lady

of the pavements
in disguise, grew up

thinking the title sounded
like the name of a church

or someone merciful
like Our Lady of Perpetual

Help. Lupe,
Our Lady of the Pavements,

lady of girls who walked
to school—white boys

at our backs—lady of men
like Daddy who laid

concrete, of mothers waiting
mornings at the bus stop,

Our Lady of *La Calle*
where Mama always said

I was or would end up
one day, Our Lady

of Lamplight, Our Lady
of Shadow, Lady of all

that falls along
these sundown streets.