

RAMÓN LÓPEZ VELARDE, A LAND SAILOR ON A CHANDELIER-SHAPED BOAT

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Abstract: *The poetry of Ramón López Velarde—Mexico’s national poet—is rich in maritime metaphors and other symbolic elements related to the ocean. Words such skiff, coast, archipelago, anchor, etc., are frequent throughout his work. What is surprising about his abundant maritime metaphors is the fact that López Velarde never saw the ocean. Our poet was born in Jerez, a tiny village in the state of Zacatecas, hundreds of kilometres away from Mexico’s coastline. In spite of this, López Velarde constructs his own poetic universe against a backdrop formed by the sea and other similar metaphors. The ocean is that vastness that allows him to express his ardent Catholicism, his oft-quoted dualism, and his obsession with the female body. This discussion is based on some of his poems, namely *The Chandelier*, a lamp—in the shape of a ship—which illuminates the church of San Francisco, in San Luis Potosí. At the helm of this chandelier-ship, López Velarde sets off on a voyage towards his own ethic, and aesthetic, identity.*

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