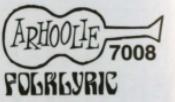


# Lydia Mendoza

Vida Mía, 1934-39



1. COSAS QUE SUCEDEN (bolero-son) (Agustín Lara) 10/19/1936
2. TODO POR TI (tango) (Maria Grever) 2/22/1936
3. CUANDO TU ME QUERIAS (cancion) 2/22/1936
4. PLEGARIA (vals) 10/22/1936
5. NOVILLERO (paso doble) (Agustín Lara) 10/19/1936
6. LA BAMBA (rumba) (Lorenzo Barcelata) 10/20/1936
7. VIDA MIA (danza) (Agustín Lara) 9/8/1939
8. DICES BIEN MIO (vals) 2/22/1936
9. LA POLLITA (tonado) 9/19/1939
10. NO PUEDO DEJAR DE QUERERTE (cancion) 3/27/1934
11. AS DE CORAZONES (bolero cancion) (Luis Alrcaráz) 1/31/1935
12. DIME MAL HOMBRE (tango cancion) 8/13/1935
13. AMOR SIN ESPERANZA (danza) 10/19/1936
14. POBRECITA DE MI ALMA (bolero clave) (Agustín Lara) 8/13/1935
15. FUE MENTIRA (MENTIROSA) (cancion) (Alfonso Esparza Oteo) 9/8/1939
16. LEJOS (tango) (Agustín Lara) 3/27/1934
17. OJOS TRISTES (cancion) (Guty Cardenas) 2/22/1936
18. TEMO (cancion clave) (A. Lara) 1/31/1935
19. TENGO A MI LUPE (cancion) 10/22/1936  
- La Familia Mendoza
20. LAMENTO BORINCANO (danzon) (Rafael Hernández) 3/27/1934
21. LEJOS DE TI (vals cancion) 10/20/1936
22. NO SABES COMPRENDER (tango) (Juan D. Montes) 9/19/1939
23. LA CHINA (huapango) 3/27/1934  
- La Familia Mendoza
24. MARIA, MARIA (cancion) 3/27/1934  
- La Familia Mendoza
25. EL COCO (cancion) 2/22/1936  
- La Familia Mendoza

LYDIA MENDOZA – vocals and 12 string guitar  
violin on 19,23, 24, & 25

with:

MARÍA MENDOZA – mandolin on 4, 6, 7, 9,  
21, & 22

LA FAMILIA MENDOZA – on 19, 23, 24, & 25

Francisco D. Mendoza – triangle & vocals

Leonor Mendoza – guitar & vocals

Lydia Mendoza – violin

Maria Mendoza – mandolin & vocals

Juan Mendoza – vocals

# Lydia Mendoza

Vida Mía



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10341 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito, CA 94530, USA



# Lydia Mendoza

Vida Mía  
1934-39

"I don't know where I stick a song so it doesn't go away," says Lydia Mendoza. "I believe I inherited something from my mother — her memory, her music." Today, at 83, she has an astonishing recollection for the details of her life and music. Lydia was the first exponent of Mexican music celebrated in the United States. Her artistry is the blossoming of a folk tradition preserved and developed over generations by a family matriarchy. Songs of earlier eras were passed down beginning with Lydia's great-grandmother, who sang and played guitar. Many of these old songs became the basic repertory of the Mendoza family and would sustain them through the Great Depression and beyond.

During the Mexican Revolution, Lydia's parents left their native Monterrey, Nuevo León, for the safety of south Texas and the hope of a more prosperous life. Although the family eventually settled in San Antonio, Lydia Mendoza was born in Houston in 1916. At an early age she exhibited tremendous musical ability,

playing the mandolin and violin in the group the family had put together to earn their living. By the age of seven she was quite proficient on guitar which she learned from both her mother and grandmother. It was during the late 1920s, in the Plaza del Zacate (a market that functioned as the social center in San Antonio) and *carpas* (tent shows that traveled throughout the region) that the family's musical career began. In 1928, responding to an ad in the Spanish language paper, *La Prensa*, that solicited local talent, the Mendoza family made their first recordings (now available on ARH CD 7002). These were made in a San Antonio hotel room. Lydia soon became the focus of attention for audiences and, while she initially sang harmony to her mother, Leonor, she eventually sang lead.

While still a teenager, her popularity grew with regular performances on radio station KABC. This led to a series of solo recordings, and at the age of 18 she recorded

her first hit, "Mal Hombre," which became her signature piece and characterized her unique style (available on ARH CD 7002.) Although she continued to perform with the family, her career as a solo artist was firmly established.

It is important to note the singularity of Lydia's approach to performing: it was indeed uncommon for a Mexican female singer to accompany herself on guitar. During the 1930s she learned several of the songs that appear in this collection while listening to XEW, which she was able to tune in from Mexico City. She heard the latest love songs of composers like Agustín Lara, María Grever, Rafael Hernández and others, sung in a theatrical *bel canto* style with orchestra accompaniment. However, Lydia took these romantic tunes and sang them with a sweet earthiness coupled with her rich, lonesome 12 string guitar sound. The result was the music of a female troubadour.

These recordings of boleros, tangos, paso dobles and other forms were made between 1934 and 1939. In reverse of the usual trend, she employed her bare-bones style to make these popular songs sound as

if she had conceived them herself and that the original versions came later. Lydia also mastered other musical styles, eventually recording with mariachis, conjuntos and trios for various labels. Although she is considered one of the most important figures in Mexican-American and Tejano music, it is only because of the cultural distance from Mexico that Lydia was less known there (even though her records were widely distributed throughout the Spanish speaking western hemisphere).

In a career that spans nearly 70 years, Lydia can be regarded as an essential part of American folk music. Her music is as compelling and significant as that of say, Leadbelly or the Carter Family, and warrants the same acclaim. In a recent conversation about the recordings presented here, verses and melodies of each piece flowed from her as if she were still performing them. The lucid memories of the songs, and the events surrounding them, revealed a devotion to this fertile musical heritage. May it continue to flourish.

Hilda Méndez – 1998



## 1 Cosas Que Suceden

(Agustín Lara)

Cosas que suceden,  
que pueden pasar;  
cosas que ni el alma  
se puede explicar.

¡Cuántas veces se odia,  
de tanto que se ama!  
A veces sonrémos  
en vez de llorar.

Mil veces he tratado  
de olvidarte,  
me enamoré de ti  
sin conocerte;  
y hoy que cerca de mi  
vuelvo a mirarte,  
no sé por qué,  
no sé por qué,  
no sé por qué,  
no puedo ya quererte.

## Things That Happen

1

Things that happen,  
that can come to pass,  
things that even the soul  
cannot explain.

How often one hates,  
from loving so much!  
Sometimes we smile  
instead of crying.

A thousand times I have tried  
to forget you,  
I fell in love with you  
without knowing you,  
and now that, close to me,  
I see you again,  
I don't know why,  
I don't know why,  
I don't know why,  
I can't love you anymore.

## 2

## Todo Por Ti All for You

(María Grever)

Por ti abandoné a mi madre  
y solita la dejé,  
sin preocuparme siquiera  
si tenía de comer.  
Hasta que llegó una noche

For you I abandoned my mother,  
and left her alone,  
without even worrying  
if she had anything to eat.  
Until one night came

en que muerta la soñé,  
y hecho un loco fui a buscarla  
pero ya no la encontré.

Supe que mi pobre vieja  
sin saber ya lo que hacer  
pedía de puerta en puerta  
si le dieran de comer.

Y en el rincón de una iglesia,  
muerta de frío tal vez,  
sin exhalar ni una queja  
pasó todo su vejez.

Con una de las vecinas  
me dejó escrito un papel  
que borroneado por el llanto  
apenas se pudo leer.

Hijo de mi alma, decía,  
sé bueno con la mujer  
que te quitó de mi lado  
que yo ya la perdoné.

Y si Dios te diera un hijo  
hablale mucho de mí,  
dile que no te abandone  
como tú me hiciste a mí.

Si tiene los ojos negros  
y si se parece a tí,  
dale un beso que su madre  
le dejó antes de morir.

when I dreamt she had died,  
I set out frantically to search for her  
but now I couldn't find her.

I found out that my poor mother,  
without knowing what else to do  
went from door to door  
asking people for food.

And in the corner of a church,  
half dead from the cold,  
without ever complaining,  
she spent her last years.

With one of the neighbors  
she left me a note,  
half erased by her tears  
it could hardly be read.

"My dear son" it read,  
"be kind to the woman  
who stole you away from me,  
for I have already forgiven her."

And if God blesses you with a son,  
speak to him often of me,  
tell him not to abandon you  
as you did to me.

If he has black eyes,  
and if he looks like you,  
give him a kiss that your mother  
has left him before she died.

2

## 3

## Cuando Tu Me Querías

Cuando tu me querías  
que feliz era yo,  
solo luz y alegría  
tu cariño me dio.

Cuando tu me querías  
todo en mi era azul  
y mi vida reía  
pues mi amor eras tu.

Se ha quedado en mi alma  
un suspiro escondido,  
que está agonizando  
porque de mi te has ido.

Cuando tu me querías,  
cuando yo te adoré,  
cuando tu fuiste mía,  
cuantas cosas soñé.

## When You Loved Me

When you loved me  
how happy I was,  
only joy and light  
your love gave to me.

When you loved me  
all in me was blue,  
and my life laughed,  
because you were my love.

There has remained in my soul  
a hidden sigh,  
that is agonizing  
because you have left me.

When you loved me,  
when I adored you,  
when you were mine,  
how many things I dreamed.

## 3

## 4

## Plegaria

## Prayer

## 4

Traigo estas flores de mi jardín  
a tu santuario con devoción  
vengo buscando consuelo a mis males,  
en el amparo de tu protección.

No sé rezar, no sé llorar, y vengo a ti  
con ésta ofrenda deshojada del jardín  
yo quiero Virgencita mía elevarte un ruego  
para que retorne a mi lado el hombre que quiero.

En mi cantar, hecho dolor, te doy mi amor  
la triste fe de mi querer pongo a tus pies  
y beso tu sagrado manto, fuente de esperanza,  
en tanto que lo allá perdido tarda en renacer.

Mi Virgencita, fuente de fe  
líbrame el alma de este dolor  
y que retorne el amor en mi pecho  
por él que adoro y me abandonó.

No sé rezar, no se llorar, y vengo a ti  
con esta cruz le dí el amor que ya perdí  
yo quiero Virgencita mía terminar mi ruego  
pidiendo que vuelva a mi lado el hombre que quiero.

En mi cantar, hecho dolor, te doy mi amor  
la triste fe de mi querer pongo a tus pies  
y beso tu sagrado manto, fuente de esperanza,  
porque tus ojos claros dicen pronto va a volver.

I bring these flowers from my garden  
to your sanctuary with devotion,  
I come seeking solace from my cares  
in the shelter of your protection.

I don't know how to pray or to cry, and I come to you  
with this offering picked from my garden,  
I want to send you a prayer my Virgin,  
so that the man I love will return to me.

In my song, made from my pain, I give you my love  
my sad faith in my love I put at your feet,  
and I kiss your sacred robe, fountain of hope,  
because what is once lost can take a long time to return.

My dear Virgin, fountain of faith,  
free my soul from this pain  
and return love to my heart  
for the one I love who has abandoned me.

I don't know how to pray or to cry, and I come to you  
with this cross I gave him the love I have lost,  
dear Virgin, I want to finish my prayer  
asking that the man I love return to me.

In my song, made from my pain, I give you my love  
my sad faith in my love I put at your feet,  
and I kiss your sacred robe, fountain of hope,  
because your eyes are clearly telling me  
that he will return soon.



5

Cuando

**Novillero Bull Fighter**  
(Agustín Lara)

Un domingo en la tarde se tiró al ruedo  
para calmar sus ansias de novillero.

Torrero, valiente,  
depliega el capote sin miedo,  
sin miedo a la muerte.

La Virgen te cuida  
te cubre su manto que es santo  
mantón de Manila.

Muchacho, te arrimas,  
lo mismo en un quite gallardo  
que en las banderillas.

Torrero, ¿quién sabe  
si el precio del triunfo  
lo paguen tu vida y tu sangre!



(l to r) mother Leonor, Lydia, record producer Eli Oberstein, sister Panchita. San Antonio, Texas. Oct. 1936.

5

Sunday, in the afternoon, he enters the ring  
to quiet his bull-fighter's nerves,  
brave bull-fighter,  
move your cape without fear,  
without fear of death.  
The Virgin watches over you,  
she covers you with her mantle  
which is a sacred Manila shawl.  
Young man, you approach,  
with your quick movements  
and with your banderillas.  
Bull-fighter, who knows  
if the price for your victory  
will be paid with your life and your blood!

6

**La Bamba La Bamba**  
(Lorenzo Barcelata)

La bamba en un frenesí  
caliente como la lumbre  
y ya se ha vuelto costumbré  
el bailar la bamba así,  
¿como negra? as, así, así, así...

Mueve la cadera negra,  
mueve la cintura así...  
pues le da fiebre a cualquiera  
el bailar la bamba así  
¿como negra? as, así, así, así...

Si tu bailas bamba,  
no te quiebres bamba  
tu cintura bamba, se te va a quemar.  
Bamba, bamba, bamba...

The bamba is a frenzy,  
as hot as a fire,  
and it has now become a custom  
to dance the bamba this way,  
How girl? Like this, like this, like this, like this.

Move your hips girl,  
move your waist like this,  
it will give anyone a fever  
to dance the bamba this way,  
How girl? Like this like this, like this, like this.

If you dance the bamba,  
don't break down, bamba,  
your waist, bamba, is going to burn you.  
Bamba, bamba, bamba...

7

**Vida Mía My Love**  
(Agustín Lara)

Cállate, corazón, te van a oír  
y se van a burlar de tu dolor.  
Cállate, corazón, si lo quieres decir  
dítelo siquiera en una canción.

La poca miel que tengo te entregaría;  
toda mi vanidad se rendiría;  
y todas las bocas me olvidara,  
por besarte la boca, vida mía.

Quiet, my heart, they will hear you,  
and they will laugh at your pain.  
Quiet, my heart, if you want to speak,  
at least say it in a song.

The little honey I have I would give you,  
all of my vanity would expire,  
and all other lips would be forgotten,  
by kissing you, my love.

7

## 8

## Dices Bien Mio

## You Tell Me My Love

## 8

Dices bien mío que amarme es imposible  
¿porque no quieres de mi amor apasionarte?  
yo te juré no dejar de amarte  
que ni en la tumba  
que ni en la tumba  
te dejaré de amar.

¿Que quieres que haga mi corazón sensible?  
mi pobre corazón que tanto te ama:  
si no me has de amar, tomo esta daga  
y despedaza  
y despedaza  
mi pobre corazón.

Dejarte de amar, me es imposible  
me es imposible si te quiero tanto:  
¿no hay un puñal que destruze mi alma?  
venga la muerte  
venga la muerte  
que yo sé morir de amor.

## La Pollita

Yo tengo, yo tengo para hacer crías  
una po, una pollita en mi casa  
cantando, cantando no mas lo pasa  
y no po, y no pone todavía.

## The Hen

I have a hen, I have a hen in my house  
that is for raising chicks,  
but she spends all of her time singing,  
and has yet to lay an egg.

## 9

## 9

To stop loving you is impossible for me,  
it's impossible if I love you so much:  
Is there a dagger I can destroy my soul with?  
Let death come,  
let death come  
because I know how to die from love.

You tell me, my love, that to love me is impossible,  
Why don't you want to love me?  
I swear I'll never stop loving you,  
not even in my grave,  
not even in my grave  
will I stop loving you.

What do you want my sensitive heart to do?  
my poor heart that loves you so much,  
if you won't love me, I'll take this dagger  
and cut to pieces,  
and cut to pieces  
this poor heart of mine.

Dicen que le hace, pero no le hace  
tan chiquitita quiere casarse  
dicen que le hace, le hace, le hace  
ay ay ay..... pero no le hace.

Un día, un día se me escapó  
sin que na, sin que nadie lo supiera  
y llegó, y llegó con sus pollitos  
siendo una, siendo una polla soltera.

Otro día, otro día me la encontré  
arriba, arriba de una tinaca  
abajo, abajo estaban los huevos  
y arriba, y arriba estaba la paja.

They say that she cares, but she doesn't,  
so young, and she wants to marry,  
they say that she cares, she cares, she cares,  
ay ay ay.....but she doesn't.

One day, one day she escaped from me,  
without anyone, without anyone noticing,  
and she returned, and she returned with her chicks  
even though she was an unmarried hen.

Another day, another day I found her  
on top of, on top of a water trough,  
underneath, underneath were the eggs  
and on top, on top was the straw.



## 10

## No Puedo Dejar De Querrerte

## 10

Yo no puedo dejar de quererte  
imposible se me hace el olvidarte  
un momento que dejo de verte  
un dolor se apodera de mi.

Aborresco las horas del día  
y de la noche, las horas detesto  
solo estar a tu lado apetesco  
y solo quiero vivir por ti.

## I Can't Stop Loving You

I can't stop loving you,  
impossible it seems for me to forget you,  
if I stop seeing you for just a moment  
a pain takes hold of me.

I abhor the hours of the day  
and detest the hours of the night,  
I only wish to be at your side  
and I only want to live for you.



11

## As De Corazones Ace Of Hearts (Luis Alcaráz)

As de corazones rojos,  
boquita de una mujer;  
por jugar con mis anteojos  
me tocó la de perder.

As de corazones rojos  
en tus labios carmeclí;  
dos de tréboles en tus ojos,  
con esas cartas perdí.

Tu boquita palpitante  
es un as de corazón:  
la creí de diamante.....  
así las barajas son.

En el juego de mi antojo  
me gustó para perder  
el corazóncito rojo  
de una boca de mujer.

11

Red ace of hearts,  
the lips of a woman:  
for having played with my desire  
I ended up losing.

Red ace of hearts,  
in your crimson lips:  
two of clubs in your eyes,  
with those cards I lost.

Your palpitating lips  
are an ace of hearts:  
I thought they were diamonds instead,  
that's how the cards are.

In the game of my desire  
I picked to lose  
the little red heart  
of a woman's lips.

12

## Díme Mal Hombre Tell Me, Bad Man Composed by a fan in Colombia after "Mal Hombre"

La noche que juraste que eras mío  
ser tuyo para siempre yo juré  
cegada por un loco desvarío  
la honra y el cariño te entregué.

Rendida, entre las redes de tu engaño  
sintiendo un beso tuyo me dormí  
mas luego al despertar el desengaño  
mató la ilusión, pues ya no te ví.

Díme mal hombre, porque me abandonaste  
si sola me dejaste llorando tu traición.  
Díme mal hombre, porque en mis labios preso  
dejaste aquel beso que fue mi perdición.

Gozaste tu traición y entre la gente  
de infamia mi deshonra pregonó  
y al verme sin honor bajé la frente  
y el mundo sin piedad me señaló.

Juré vengar la ofensa recibida  
ahogando con tu sangre mi dolor  
y vine aquí a matarte decidida  
y al verte ante de mí me faltó el valor.

Quiero mirarte, tenerte muy cerquita  
aunque por ti palpita mi pobre corazón,  
porque en mis labios aun vive prisionero  
el beso traicionero que fué mi perdición.

The night that you swore you would be mine,  
I swore that I would always be yours,  
blinded by crazy passion  
my honor and my love I entrusted to you.

Given up, caught within your web of lies,  
feeling your kiss I fell asleep,  
but later when I awoke, reality destroyed  
my illusion, because you were gone.

Tell me bad man, why did you abandon me,  
you only left me alone, crying your betrayal.  
Tell me bad man, why, on the ruby of my lips  
did you leave the kiss that was to be my ruin.

You enjoyed your betrayal, and went about  
scandalizing my name amongst the people,  
and finding myself dishonored, I lowered my head  
and the world pointed to me without pity.

I swore to avenge your offense  
and to drown my pain in your blood,  
and I came here intending to kill you,  
but upon seeing you I lacked the courage.

I want to see you, to have you near me  
because for you my sad heart still beats,  
because upon my lips still lives, a prisoner,  
the traitorous kiss that was my ruin.

# 13

## Amor Sin Esperanza

Si vieras que horrible es amar,  
amar sin ninguna esperanza,  
horrible cuando el hombre no alcanza,  
cuando el hombre te canza de sufrir y llorar.

Recuerda que llorando te juré  
no amar jamás a otra mujer  
sin comprender que mas tarde el corazón  
había de amar, había de amar con cruel dolor.

Nunca olvides bien al hombre que te adora  
de rodillas te pide este amor que te implora,  
recuerda para siempre al hombre que te llora  
y ofrenda su vida si loquieres ahora.



## Love Without Hope

If you knew how horrible it is to love,  
to love without a single hope,  
horrible when a man doesn't understand,  
when a man makes you tire of suffering and crying.

Remember that crying, I swore to you  
I would never love another woman,  
without understanding that later my heart  
was going to love with cruel pain.

Never forget dear the man who loves you,  
on his knees, imploring, he asks for this love,  
remember always the man who cries for you,  
and offers his life if you want it now.

# 13

# 14

## Pobrecita De Mi Alma

Poor Girl Of My Heart  
(Agustín Lara)

Pobrecita de mi alma, que triste está,  
cuando de mi se aleja, llorando va.

Todo se me hace triste  
lejos de ti,  
porque sé que no me amas  
no mas a mí, no mas a mí....

Suave perfume vierte, la pobre flor,  
el perfume de mi alma, es el dolor.

Quiero que lo recogas  
con avidez  
aunque luego lo tires  
bajo tus pies, bajo tus pies.

My poor little girl, how sad she is  
when she leaves me, she goes away crying.

Everything seems sad to me  
when I'm away from you,  
because I know you don't love  
just me alone, just me alone....

The poor flower exhales, sweet perfume,  
Pain is the perfume, of my soul.

I want you to pick it up  
avidly,  
though later you toss it  
under your feet, under your feet.

# 15

## Fue Mentira (Mentirosa)

It Was A Lie  
(Alfonso Esparza Oteo)

Fuiste mentirosa con mi querer  
al jurarme que me amabas de verdad;  
siempre las palabras de una mujer  
solo saben, solo saben engañar.

Nada, nada queda en el corazón,  
las cenizas del olvido lo cubrió;  
y aunque el beso que te di  
yo jamás te lo fingí,  
fue mentira, fue mentira nuestro amor.

You were false with my affections  
when you swore you would love me truly,  
the words of a woman  
only know how to deceive.

Nothing, nothing is left in my heart,  
the ashes of oblivion have covered all,  
and although the kiss I gave you  
was never untrue,  
our love, our love was just a lie.

# 15

**Lejos** Far Away  
(Agustín Lara)

Ahora, que pone la distancia  
su velo de recuerdo separando a los dos,  
ahora, que la terrible duda  
salpica de nostalgia el corazón.

Ahora, que lejos he dejado  
lo que para mi vida era como una flor,  
blanca, toda llena de armonía,  
llena de melancolía, como yo.

Lejos, lejos se ha quedado el amor mío,  
¿cuando, cuando la volveré a ver?  
¡Nunca! Nunca quiero yo perderla,  
preferiría perder la vida  
que olvidar a esa mujer.

**Ojos Tristes** Sad Eyes  
(Guty Cardenas)

Tienen tus ojos un raro encanto  
tus ojos tristes como de niño  
que no ha sentido ningún cariño  
tus ojos dulces como de santo.

¡Ay! Si no fuera pedirte tanto,  
yo te pidiera vivir de hinojos  
mirando siempre tus tristes ojos;  
ojos que tienen, ojos que tienen  
sabor de llanto.

Now, that distance puts on  
its veil of memory, separating the two of us,  
now, that terrible doubts  
afflict the heart with nostalgia.

Now, that far away I have left  
what was like a flower to me,  
white, full of harmony,  
full of melancholy, like me.

Far, far away my love was left,  
When will I ever see her again?  
Never! I never want to lose her,  
I'd rather lose my life  
than to forget that woman.

**Temo** Fear  
(Agustín Lara)

Temo que no me quieras,  
¡Has querido ya tanto!  
Has puesto tanto luto  
en tantos corazones,  
Has puesto tanto luto  
en tantos corazones.

Que sintiendo muy cerca  
la lumbre de tu llanto  
has hecho que mi llanto  
se convierta en canciones,  
has hecho que mi llanto  
se convierta en canciones.

Que tú ya no me quieras  
es lo único que temo,  
que se mueran las rosas  
de mi melancolía.  
que se mueran las rosas  
de mi melancolía.

Concédemelo siquiero  
el deleite supremo  
de besar esa boca  
que nunca ha de ser mía,  
de besar esa boca  
que nunca ha de ser mía.

I fear that you don't love me,  
You who have loved so much!  
You have put so much mourning  
in so many hearts!  
You have put so much mourning  
in so many hearts!

That feeling so close  
the fire of your tears,  
you have made my sorrow  
turn into songs,  
you have made my sorrow  
turn into songs.

That you no longer love me  
is the only thing that I fear,  
that the roses of my melancholy  
should die,  
that the roses of my melancholy  
should die.

At least let me have  
the supreme delight  
of kissing your lips  
that will never be mine,  
of kissing your lips  
that will never be mine.



# 19

## Tengo A Mi Lupe

Tengo a mi Lupe con su boquita risueña,  
me dió su mano para que me acordara de ella,  
en este mundo yo no quiero a las morenas,  
porque no quiero que otra sufra mas por mi.

Pues ahora si, mi Lupita vine a verte.  
Pues ahora si, se acabaron mis trabajos.  
Yo lo que quiero es que me estreches en tus brazos,  
porque no quiero que otra sufra mas por mi.

## I Have My Lupe

# 19

I have my Lupe with her smiling little mouth,  
she gave me her hand so that I would remember her,  
in this world I don't love any dark skinned women,  
because I don't want any more of them to suffer for me.

All right now, my Lupita I've come to see you,  
all right now, my work is finished,  
what I want you to do is to hold me in your arms  
because I don't want any other woman to suffer for me.

# 20

## "Lamento Borincano"

(Rafael Hernández)

Sale loco de contento  
con su cargamento  
para la ciudad, para la ciudad.  
Lleva en su pensamiento  
todo un mundo lleno  
de felicidad, de felicidad.

Piensa remediar la situación  
del lugar que es toda su ilusión.

Y alegre, el jibarito va  
contando así, diciendo así  
por el camino  
que si la carga vendo  
mi Dios querido,  
un traje a mi viejita voy a comprar.  
Y alegre, tambien la llegua va

## Puerto Rican Lament

# 20

For the city he leaves  
happy and contented  
with all of his wares.  
He carries in his thoughts  
a whole world full  
of happiness, of happiness.

He thinks that he is going to make things better  
in the place that is dearest to him.

And happily, the Puerto Rican goes,  
singing like this, talking like this  
on down the road:  
If I manage to sell my goods,  
my dear God,  
I'll buy a new dress for my wife.  
And happily, his horse goes along too,

al presentirse en su cantar  
en que vierte toda su alegría,  
Y en eso le sorprende  
la luz del día,  
llegando al mercado  
de la ciudad.

Pasa la mañana entera  
sin que nadie quiera  
su carga comprar, su carga comprar.  
Todo, todo esta desierto,  
el pueblo esta muerto  
de necesidad, de necesidad.

Se oye este lamento por dondequiero,  
de mi desdichado Borinquen.

Y triste, el jibarito va  
cantando así, diciendo así  
por el camino,  
¿Que será de Borinquen  
mi Dios querido?  
¿Que serán de mis hijos  
y de mi hogar?

Borinquen, la tierra del eden,  
la que al cantar el gran Gautier llamó  
la perla de los mares,  
ahora que tu te mueres  
con tus pesares,  
dejame que te cante, yo también,  
yo también.

feeling happiness in his song,  
that song in which he puts all of his happiness,  
and with that he is greeted  
by the break-of day,  
arriving at the market place  
in the city.

He passes the entire morning,  
without anyone stopping  
to buy his goods.  
Everything is deserted,  
the town is dead,  
dead from necessity.

You hear this lament everywhere,  
everywhere in my unhappy Puerto Rico.

And sadly, the Puerto Rican goes,  
singing like this, talking like this  
on down the road,  
Dear God, what will become of my  
beloved Puerto Rico?  
What will happen to my children  
and to my home?

Puerto Rico, land of Eden,  
who the great Gautier once called  
“the pearl of the oceans,”  
now that you are dying  
with your troubles  
let me sing to you as well,  
let me sing to you as well.

# 21

## Lejos De Ti

¡Ay! Lejos de ti  
yo ya no puedo vivir  
angel de mi amor,  
de tu ausencia,  
me siento el morir,  
eres mi ilusión, eres mi único amor.  
¡Ay! Lejos de ti,  
la alegría me parece el sufrir.

Lejos de ti sufro, lejos de ti lloro  
será porque te quiero,  
será porque te adoro,  
siento que mi corazón  
del pecho quiere salir,  
porque mi alma sufre mucho  
cuando está lejos de ti.

Cuando te veo, siento un golpe inmenso,  
porque al separarme  
yo jamás lo pienso.  
Si quieras verme feliz,  
nunca te ausentes de mí,  
porque mi alma sufre mucho  
cuando está lejos de ti.

# 22

## No Sabes Comprender

(Juan D. Montes)

El terrible fantasma de la prostitución  
refleja en mi cerebro dictando esta canción.

## Far From You

Ay! far away from you  
I cannot live any longer,  
angel of my heart,  
from your absence,  
I feel that I'm dying,  
you are my dream, you are my only love.  
Ay! far away from you,  
happiness seems like suffering to me.

Away from you I suffer, away from you I cry,  
perhaps because I love you,  
perhaps because I adore you,  
I feel that my heart  
wants to jump out of my breast,  
because my soul suffers much,  
when it is away from you.

When I see you, I feel a great blow has struck me,  
because when we part  
I never think of it.  
If you want to see me happy,  
never leave my side,  
because my soul suffers much,  
when it is away from you.



# 21

En el momento actual, la vida es un ideal,  
la puede uno gozar así....Se pierde la mujer,  
tratarle es un placer, el hombre debe estar allí.

Deja, deja que me pierdiera yo...  
quiero seguir mi perdición.  
Te odio, te odio, no me acerques, no.  
Pues para mí no hay ya salvación.

Mi miseraria existencia la arrastro por doquier,  
ya todo es culpa tuya, no sabes comprender.  
Y haces como hombre cruel, te agrada tu papel,  
que me ha despresidiado a mí.....  
en el templo del mal, mi cuerpo ofrendo tal  
para favorecer a ti.

Deja, deja que en vino me ahogue yo,  
para olvidar tu mala acción,  
vete, vete, no quiero verte, no.  
Mejor quiero morir, sin compasión.

Mas hiciste bien la vida, como el de la mujer  
ella lo arrastra todo, no sabes comprender,  
mi suerte es fatal, pues la persigue el mal,  
el hombre es promotor de él.

Para ella no hay perdón,  
ni menos compasión,  
porque reclamar la infiel.

Sufre, sufre en silencio su mal,  
porque ella ama de corazón,  
triste, triste en sufrir termina,  
muere en el acto de prostitución.

At the present moment, life is an ideal,  
and one should enjoy it as such... A woman who is lost  
is a pleasure to know, and a man should be there.

Let me, let me lose myself,  
let me follow my road to perdition.  
I hate you, I hate you, don't come near, don't,  
for me there will be no salvation.

My miserable existence I drag about the world,  
and all is your fault, you can't understand.  
You act like a bad man, and you like the role,  
you have ruined my reputation...  
in the temple of evil, I offer my body  
to benefit you.

Let me, let me drown my sorrows in wine  
so I can forget the bad things you've done,  
Go away, go away, I don't want to see you again.  
I'd rather die without compassion.

You did well for yourself, like the woman,  
she carries it all, you can't understand,  
my luck is down, and evil follows me,  
and man is behind it all.

For the woman there is no redemption,  
and much less compassion,  
why blame her for what she is.

Suffer, suffer in silence your wrong,  
because she has loved with all her heart,  
sad, sad, she ends up suffering  
and dying in the act of prostitution.

# 22

## You Can't Understand

(Juan D. Montes)

The terrible nightmare of prostitution  
flashes through my mind, spelling out this song.

**23**

La China

Yo tenía una china, china  
como las barbas del coco,  
el que besa su boquita  
no se muere, queda loco.

Si vieras, China, que cuanto te quiero,  
debías de quererme como yo te quiero.

Si vieras, China, que cuanto te quiero,  
debías de quererme como yo te quiero.

El interés de la plata  
me hizo bajar a la mina:  
encontré a una muchacha,  
esa de la frente china.

Que bonito paño blanco,  
me gusta mas de florero:  
¿No dices que no te quiero?  
¡Te quiero y te retequiero!

Meciendome en un columpio  
se me reventó la riata,  
que el amor que se hace nudo  
con trabajo se desata.



Curly Haired Lady

I had a girl with curls  
like the wavy hairs of coconuts,  
whoever kissed her lips  
either died or went crazy.

Curly haired girl, if you knew how much  
I love you, you should love me just the same.  
Curly haired girl, if you knew how much  
I love you, you should love me just the same.

My love for silver  
made me go down into the mine  
There I found that girl  
with the curly hair.

That pretty scarf  
would look better as a flower pot  
you say I don't love you,  
I love you more than enough.

While rocking myself in a swing  
the rope broke:  
when love becomes a knot  
it's hard to get untangled.

**23**

**24**

María, María

Cuando me vine de abajo,  
sobre las olas venía:  
con el bullicio del agua  
me acordaba de María  
Marfa, Mariquita mía.

Dicen que me han de quitar  
las veredas de tu casa,  
mentiras, no quitan nada,  
son pollos de mala raza.  
María, Mariquita mía.

Dicen que me han de quitar  
las veredas por donde ando,  
me quitarán las veredas  
pero la querencia cuando,  
María, Mariquita mía.

Ya se cayó el arbolito  
donde yo me divertía,  
donde pasaba las horas en  
los brazos de María,  
Marfa, Mariquita mía.

Maria, Maria

When I came from down below  
I came riding on the waves,  
with the sound of the water  
I remembered Maria  
Maria, my dear Maria.

They say they take away from me  
the paths that lead to your house,  
they are lying, they won't take anything,  
they are low-born chickens.  
Maria, my dear Maria.

They say they take away from me  
the paths I am following,  
they may take away my paths,  
but never my desires.  
Maria, my dear Maria.

The little tree has fallen down,  
the one I used to enjoy myself on,  
where I spent hours and hours  
in the arms of Maria,  
Maria, my dear Maria.



Para sacarle agua al coco  
se le hace un agujerito,  
el que tiene chiche mama,  
y el que no, se cría sanchito.

Como que te vas, como que te vas  
como que te vienes,  
pero vida mía ¡Que borracho vienes!  
Como que te vienes, como que te vienes  
como que te vas, pero vida mía,  
¡Que borracho estas!

Hasta la barranca se oyen  
los gritos del garzón verde,  
y la mujer que es celosa  
hasta la cola se muerde.

No me casaré con viuda,  
no me casaré por cierto,  
por no ponerme las manos  
donde las puso el muerto.

El que se casa con vieja  
ese si que es majadero,  
cuando la quiere besar  
ya nomás le arruga el cuero.

To get the juice of a coconut  
you make a little hole,  
the one who has a tit draws milk,  
the one who doesn't grows up  
without a mama.

First you go that way and that way,  
then you go this way,  
Oh, Honey, you sure are drunk!  
Now you come this way and this way,  
and then you go that way,  
Oh, Honey, you sure are drunk!

All the way to the creek  
you can hear the green heron wailing,  
the woman who is jealous  
ends up biting her own tail.

I wouldn't marry a widow,  
for sure I wouldn't,  
I don't want to put my hands  
where a dead man put his.

Whoever marries an old woman  
is more than a fool:  
because when he wants to kiss her  
he only wrinkles up her skin.

Mid 1930's

(l to r)  
Lydia, Juanita, Leonor,  
Manuel, and María.

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# *Lydia Mendoza*

A Family Autobiography



COMPILED AND INTRODUCED BY  
Chris Strachwitz with James Nicolopoulos

The Family's story as told to the authors. The book includes a comprehensive discography listing all recordings made by members of the family.  
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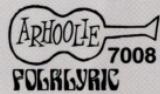
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# Lydia Mendoza

Vida Mia  
1934-39



1. COSAS QUE SUCEDEN (bolero-son)
2. TODO POR TI (tango)
3. CUANDO TU ME QUIERAS (cancion)
4. PLEGARIA (vals)
5. NOVILLERO (paso doble)
6. LA BAMBA (rumba)
7. VIDA MIA (danza)
8. DICES BIEN MIO (vals)
9. LA POLLITA (tonado)
10. NO PUEDO DEJAR DE QUERETE (cancion)
11. AS DE CORAZONES (bolero canción)
12. DIME MAL HOMBRE (tango canción)
13. AMOR SIN ESPERANZA (danza)
14. POBRECITA DE MI ALMA (bolero clave)
15. FUE MENTIRA (MENTIROSA) (cancion)
16. LEJOS (tango)
17. OJOS TRISTES (cancion)
18. TEMO (cancion clave)
19. TENGO A MI LUPE (cancion)
20. LAMENTO BORINCANO (danzon)
21. LEJOS DE TI (vals canción)
22. NO SABES COMPRENDER (tango)
23. LA CHINA (huapango)
24. MARIA, MARIA (cancion)
25. EL COCO (cancion)

**La Alondra de la Frontera & La Cancionera de los Pobres** were some of the monikers bestowed upon Lydia by her fans throughout her long career. She captivated not only Tejanos of south Texas, but spanish speaking people throughout the western hemisphere with her songs of love, betrayal, and hardship. For these recordings from early in her career (1934-39) Lydia employed a great variety of songs: boleros, tangos, canciones, paso dobles, danzas and many others. With the exception of a few recordings with her family (where she plays the violin,) Lydia accompanies herself with the rich sound of her 12 string guitar on these early solo performances, assisted on a few by her sister, mandolinist María Mendoza.

**LYDIA MENDOZA** – vocals and 12 string guitar  
(violin on 19,23, 24, & 25)

MARÍA MENDOZA – mandolin on 4, 6, 7, 9, 21, & 22  
LA FAMILIA MENDOZA: on 19, 23, 24, & 25  
Francisco D. Mendoza – triangle & vocals  
Leonor Mendoza – guitar & vocals  
Lydia Mendoza – violin  
María Mendoza – mandolin & vocals  
Juan Mendoza – vocals

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