

Ismael Sombra (Santiago de Cuba, 1947).

In 1976 he graduated with a degree in Literature and Hispanic Language. He was one of the founders of the "*Movimiento Columna* (CJEAC) de Escritores y Artistas de Oriente" (*Movement Column* of Writers and Artists of Orient), a movement which preceded the UNEAC in Cuba. He became board member of The Association "Hermanos Saíz" (Brothers Saíz) of writers and Artists, and in 1991 was also founder, in Santiago de Cuba, of the first Independent Association of Cuban Writers and Artists) called EL GRUPO. He founded the literary magazines "Museo" and "El Grupo". He worked as a redactor and co-editor of the literary magazine "Heredia", He was a stage actor and analytic consultant, screen writer, actor, and director of the Cuban Television.

He has published poetry, short stories, literary critic and essays in both Cuban and international magazines and journals. In 1971, in a competition hosted by the Universidad de Oriente, he was prized in the poetry and also in the short story category. In 1973 the poetry book **Bajo lámparas festivas** (Under festive lamps), was finalist in the national contest "26 de Julio" (July 26th). His essay **La voluntad creadora de José Martí** (The creativity of José Martí), was national prize of the VI Martian Seminaries, in 1974. In 1976 he was awarded the prize in the Children's Theatre Competition held by the Conjunto Dramático de Oriente in conjunction with the Cuban Ministry of Culture. In 1978, in the "30 de Noviembre" (November 30<sup>th</sup>) open competition, his play for children **Los Pájaros del Sol** (The Sun's birds), obtained the theatre prize. In 1984, in the open contest "Concurso Nacional de Narrativa de Amor" (National storytelling competition on love issues) he was awarded the prize for his work **Alarma en El Capitolio** (Alarm in The Capitol), and also he was a finalist in the Casa de Las Americas International Contest for his poetry book **Hombres Familiar o Monólogo de las confesiones** (Family's man or Monologue of confessions). This work was highly praised by the Spanish poet José Agustín Goytisolo and by the renowned Cuban poet Guillermo Rodríguez Rivera both juror. This book also received honorary mention in 1996, in the national contest "Heredia". In 1985 he was awarded the first prize of poetry in the contest "30 de Junio" (June 30<sup>th</sup>) with the long poem **Frank en la memoria** (Remembering Frank). He received award in the international contest of short story category "**A Quien Corresponda**", in Mexico 1998.

His poems have appeared in several anthologies of poets. He has published **Para Ti Mujer** (It is for you, woman), poems, Colección Plegables, Cuba, 1997; **Nuestro Pan** (Our Bread), poems, Colección Plegables, Cuba, 1978; **Las Cinco Plumas y la Luz del Sol** (The Five Feathers and the Sun Light) children's story, Editorial Oriente, Cuba, 1987; **Para no ser leído en Recital** (Not to be read on a poetry reading), a selection of poems, Editorial Oriente, 1991; the poetry book **Hombre familiar o Monólogo de las confesiones** (Familiar Man o Monologue of Confessions), Betania, 1999; **El único José Martí, principal opositor a Fidel Castro** (The unique José Martí, main opponent to Fidel Castro), Betania, 2000; **The arte of growing wings** (El arte de crear alas), Children's stories, Art Gallery of Ontario, 2000; **Los ángulos del silencio, trilogía poética**, (The corners of the silence, poetic trilogy) Verbum, 2001; **Vivir lo soñado, cuentos breves** (To live the dreams, short stories), Betania, 2002; **Bajo Lámparas festivas** (under festive lamps), Editorial Libro Libro, 2004; **Queridos amantes de la libertad** (Dear lovers of the Freedom), Betania, 2005; **The five feathers**, (Las cinco Plumas), Ediciones LL, 2010; **L'histoire des cinq plumes**, (La historia de las cinco plumas,) Ediciones LL, 2012; **Cuentos de la prisión más grande del mundo**, (Tales of the world's largest prison), Palibrio, 2015. Mr. Sombra has other books still unpublished.

Mr. Sombra has also devoted some time to research on literature and folklore, and he has several articles and essays published, the most notable, perhaps, being a monograph on the pioneer or prime mover of the Cuban culture and international example of great manager of industrial, Emilio Bacardi Moreau (1844-1922).

He has been translated into English, French, Portuguese and Greek. He is presently living in Toronto and he was a former "Writer in Residence" at Wilfrid Laurier University and at York University. He obtained his freedom thanks to the Government of Canada and the diligent and patient work of PEN Canada (International Association of Writers) of which he is an Honorary Member since 1996 when he was still in prison in Cuba. He is founder and president of the Cuban Canadian Foundation and New Free Press, the trilingual newspaper of Canada.