

## **Obediah Michael Smith (The Bahamas)**

Poet and teacher, **Obediah Michael Smith**, was born on March 30, 1954, on the Island of New Providence, in the Bahamas. He attended Memphis State University, in Memphis, Tennessee, 1973 to 1976. He majored in Speech & Drama and Biology.

He attended Fisk University, in Nashville, Tennessee, 1985, and obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Dramatics and Speech, in 1986. He taught English Language and Literature in High Schools in The Bahamas from 1978 to 1989.

In 1989 he spent six months writing in Paris, France and in Budapest, Hungary. While in France, he also studied French at L'Alliance Francaise.

From 1990 to 2005, in The Bahamas, he worked as a real estate agent. In 1992, he was appointed to lecture part time, in the School of English Studies, at The College of the Bahamas.

In 1995 and in 1996, on scholarships, he attended the *Caribbean Writers Summer Institute*, at University of Miami, in Miami, Florida, USA, and studied with Lorna Goodison and Earl Lovelace.

In 1999, 2001 and 2004, he attended The University of the West Indies [UWI], Cave Hill, Barbados and participated in Writers Workshops, facilitated by Grace Nichols, Merle Collins and Mervyn Morris.

In Trinidad, in 2006, he was one of the poets representing The Bahamas, at *Carifesta IX*. In 2007, he participated in the 26<sup>th</sup> *West Indian Literature Conference*, at the College of the Bahamas, on New Providence, in The Bahamas. In Guyana, in 2008, he was one of the poets who represented the Bahamas at *Carifesta X*.

In 2009 and in 2011 he facilitated the Poetry Workshop for the *Bahamas Writers Summer Institute*, at The College of the Bahamas.

He participated in the 12<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> *Havana International Poetry Festivals*, in Havana, Cuba, in 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2014.

He participated in *Hispanoamerica Poetry Festival*, in Mexico City, in 2008. He participated in *Granada International Poetry Festival*, in Nicaragua, in 2009. In 2011, he participated in *XX Medellin International Poetry Festival*, in Colombia; in *Costa Rican International Poetry Festival*, in Costa Rica; and in *Festival Mundial de la Palabras*, on Isla Mujeres, in Mexico.

Also in 2011, in Costa Rica, he studied Spanish, at *Universidad de Costa Rica*. In 2011, he spent six months, and in 2013, he spent three months in Mexico City, writing. He participated in *Verbo Poetry Festival*, in Mexico City, in 2013.

His poems in English are included in literary journals and anthologies throughout the Caribbean, in England, in Kenya, in the USA and his poems, translated into Spanish, are included in literary journals and anthologies in Colombia, in Cuba, in Mexico, in Peru, in Spain and in Venezuela.

In 2014 and in 2015, he participated in *Kistrech Poetry Festivals* in Kisii, Kenya. He has also spent three years and six months residing in Africa: Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Swaziland, Mozambique and Malawi.

From 1978 to the present, he has published twenty books of poetry: **Bicentennial Blues**, Nassau Guardian, Nassau, Bahamas, 1977; **43 Poems**, Nassau Guardian, Nassau, Bahamas, 1979; **Ice Cubes**, Nassau Guardian, Nassau, Bahamas, 1982; **Acts**, Nassau Guardian, Nassau, Bahamas, 1983; **Fruits from Africa**, Nassau Guardian, Nassau, Bahamas, 1987; **Once upon a Blank Page**, Guanima Press, Nassau, Bahamas, 1991; **As If Creation were His Crime**, Smith & Benjamin, Nassau, Bahamas, 1993; **Christmas Lights**, Publishack, Nassau, Bahamas, 2003; **Poems to Sit on to Shell Peas**, Publishack, Nassau, Bahamas, 2003; **On the Hinges of this Town**, Publishack, Nassau, Bahamas, 2003; **Open Testament** Lulu, USA, 2009; **Seventy Poems**, Lulu, USA, 2009; **In a China Shop & Other Poems**, Poinciana Paper Press, Nassau, Bahamas, 2009; **Discovery Daze: 72 Poems**, Lulu, USA, 2011; **El amplio Mar de los Sargazos y otros**

**poemas**, Fundacion Casa de Poesia, San Jose, Costa Rica, 2011; **Wide Sargasso Sea and 62 other Poems**, Lulu, USA, 2011; **YouTube Wives Or Stepping Stones**, Lulu, USA, 2014; **Cutting Teeth**, Poinciana Paper Press, Nassau, Bahamas, 2014; **Gato en el tejado**, UNEAC, Havana, Cuba, 2015; **Women in Jinja**, Lulu, USA, 2015.