

## **BORRERO PIERRA, JUANA (1877–1896)**

Like many other creative women of her day, Juana Borrero has only recently been “rediscovered” by literary and art critics, but has yet to receive the attention that many feel she deserves. A native of Puentes Grandes, Cuba, Borrero was born into an aristocratic Creole family. At the age of four she wrote her first poem and at thirteen published her first work in the literary magazine *La Habana Elegante*. In 1895, Cuban rebels, reignited the independence insurgency against the Spanish Crown and the Borrero family fled to the United States where they settled in the cigar-making community of Key West, Florida. Borrero produced five volumes of poetry, and her best known work is *Rimas* (1895), a collection of poems that earned her international acclaim. The collection includes the poem “Los proscritos,” which was written shortly after her arrival in Key West and describes her last night in Cuba. Since many of her poems describe the pain and loneliness of exile, she has become a favorite of a new generation of Cuban exiles those who arrived after the Castro revolution of 1959. A key figure in the modernist movement known as *Kábala*, Borrero was the only female modernist in Cuba. Juana Borrero died of typhoid fever at the age of eighteen, and her gravesite remained unidentified until 1972, when it was rediscovered following a lengthy study by the Cuban Society of Archeology and Ethnology in Exile. Her remains were exhumed and transferred to a private tomb, with a gravestone marker engraved “Glory of Cuba.”