

**BLACK BRANCHES:  
A BOOK OF POEMS  
AND PLAYS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649409150

Black Branches: A Book of Poems and Plays by Orrick Johns

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**ORRICK JOHNS**

**BLACK BRANCHES:  
A BOOK OF POEMS  
AND PLAYS**



Black  
Branches

UNIV. OF  
CALIFORNIA

A BOOK OF POEMS AND PLAYS

By

ORRICK JOHNS

Copyright 1929

by the

*Pagan Publishing Company*

*New York*

TO VINU  
HARONLIAO

## CONTENTS.

---

6. DEDICATION
7. THREE PLAYS IN CHIAROSCURO  
    Shadow  
    Eclipse  
    Lumière
9. SHADOW
24. ECLIPSE
36. LUMIERE
50. SONGS OF DELIVERANCE
58. TUNINGS
61. NEW SONGS OF DELIVERANCE
67. KYSEN
77. HERONE
89. THE LITTLE GENERATION

459128





UNIV. OF  
CALIFORNIA

**Dedication—Portrait**

TO THE  
UNIVERSITY OF  
CALIFORNIA

6

BLACK BRANCHES

DEDICATION—PORTRAIT.

The asters wave  
in the viridescent pattern  
of your being here.  
The lights deepened by gay awnings  
rest aimlessly with drooping arms  
on wide white armchairs.  
The ringing of bells  
draws faint echoes  
from the well-dressed sides of the chains,  
nestling in leaves.  
In the winter  
the lakes of your country  
reflect thin flames,  
the fingers of trees  
touch lightly your white and blue fabrics.  
The brown fields  
of restrained laughter  
are dotted with the white teeth  
of the snow.

Over your plains fly birds  
unexpected . . .  
You assort the days and the nights  
in your cabinets  
with languid intelligence.  
Improbably you touch the old beard of Truth  
until the unwilling mouth  
grows eloquent.  
Little do you know  
or care to know  
of his past.

## BLACK BRANCHES

7

You have seen too many torrents disappear,  
you have seen too much smoke ascend . . .  
You know better than any one  
the irregular ways  
of your desire;  
you would have no new architect  
in the narrow streets,  
with their crooked little boxes,  
where grow  
the flowers of destiny.

No less than wine are you made  
of imagination.  
What can the sun do  
but ripen you  
who have no desire for ripening.  
Distillation shall follow distillation;  
and in the end  
you shall be tasted  
by wind and shadow  
by the slow look of exiles.

Pleasure is essential. . .  
". . . Can you not figure to yourself  
the folly of other people?"  
When I stand here  
looking down at the polished ribbon  
of the river you have crossed  
for the last time,  
I do not know that I am unwilling  
to drop all the petals  
of reality.