BLACK BRANCHES: A BOOK OF POEMS AND PLAYS

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

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ORRICK JOHNS

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ORRICK JOHNS

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CONTENTS.

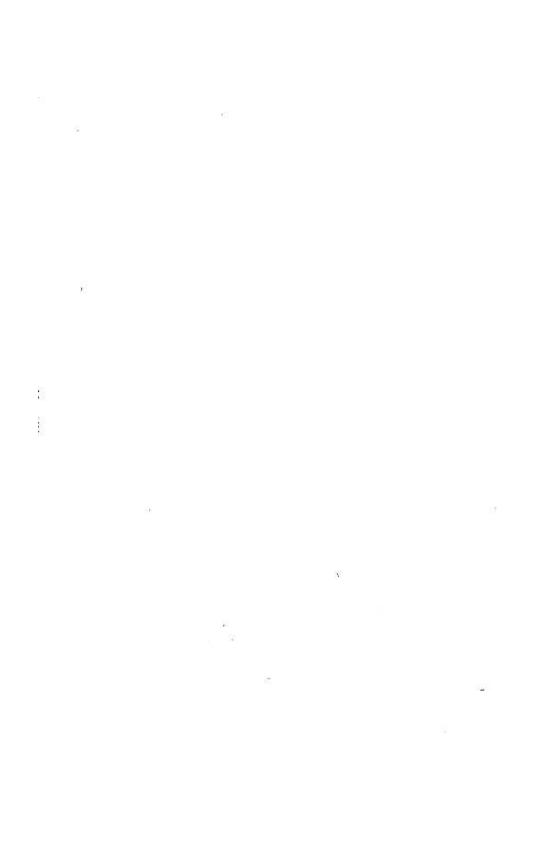
- 6. DEDICATION
- 7. THESE PLAYS IN CHIAROSCURO

Shadow

Eclipse

Lumiére

- 9. SHADOW
- 24. ECLIPSE
- 86. LUMIERE
- 50. Songs of DELIVERANCE
- 58. Tunings
- 61. NEW SONGS OF DELIVERANCE
- 67. KYEEN
- 77. HEDONE
- 19. THE LITTLE GENERATION



UMIV. OF CALIFORNIA

Dedication-Portrait

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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 belis 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.

You have seen too many torrents disappear, you have seen too much smoke seend . . . 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.