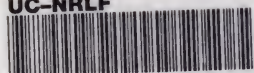


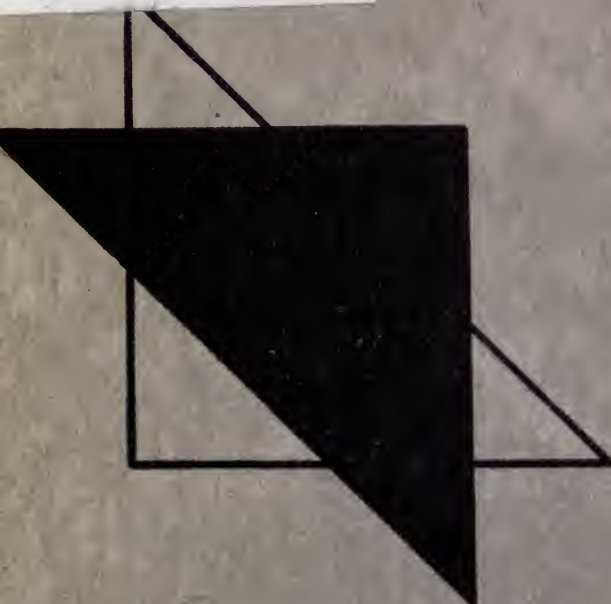
# SPECTRA

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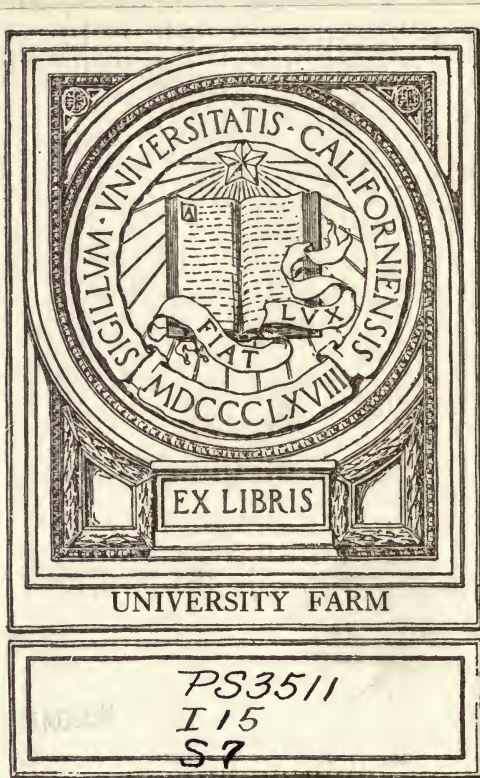


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New Poems



EMANUEL MORGAN  
ANNE KNISH



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# SPECTRA

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# SPECTRA

A BOOK OF POETIC EXPERIMENTS

BY

ANNE KNISH  
*(Arthur Davison Ficke)*  
AND

EMANUEL MORGAN  
*(Walter Byrnes)*



NEW YORK  
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## TO REMY DE GOURMONT

POET, a wreath!—  
No matter how we had combined our flowers,  
You would have worn them—being ours. . . .  
On you, on them, the showers—  
O roots beneath!

EMANUEL MORGAN.



## PREFACE

**T**HIS volume is the first compilation of the recent experiments in Spectra. It is the aim of the Spectric group to push the possibilities of poetic expression into a new region,—to attain a fresh brilliance of impression by a method not so wholly different from the methods of Futurist Painting.

An explanation of the term "Spectric" will indicate something of the nature of the technique which it describes. "Spectric" has, in this connection, three separate but closely related meanings. In the first place, it speaks, to the mind, of that process of diffraction by which are disarticulated the several colored and other rays of which light is composed. It indicates our feeling that the theme of a poem is to be regarded as a prism, upon which the colorless white light of infinite existence falls and is broken up into glowing, beautiful, and intelligible hues. In its second sense, the term Spectric relates to the reflex vibrations of physical sight, and suggests the luminous appearance

which is seen after exposure of the eye to intense light, and, by analogy, the after-colors of the poet's initial vision. In its third sense, Spectric connotes the overtones, adumbrations, or spectres which for the poet haunt all objects both of the seen and the unseen world,—those shadowy projections, sometimes grotesque, which, hovering around the real, give to the real its full ideal significance and its poetic worth. These spectres are the manifold spell and true essence of objects,—like the magic that would inevitably encircle a mirror from the hand of Helen of Troy.

Just as the colors of the rainbow recombine into a white light,—just as the reflex of the eye's picture vividly haunts sleep,—just as the ghosts which surround reality are the vital part of that existence,—so may the Spectric vision, if successful, synthesize, prolong, and at the same time multiply the emotional images of the reader. The rays which the poet has dissociated into colorful beauty should recombine in the reader's brain into a new intensity of unified brilliance. The reflex of the poet's sight should sustain the original perception with a haunting keenness. The insubstantiality of the poet's spectres should touch with a tremulous vibrancy

---

of ultimate fact the reader's sense of the immediate theme.

If the Spectrist wishes to describe a landscape, he will not attempt a map, but will put down those winged emotions, those fantastic analogies, which the real scene awakens in his own mind. In practice this will be found to be the vividest of all modes of communication, as the touch of hands quickens a mere exchange of names.

It may be noted that to Spectra, to these reflected experiences of life, as we perceive them, adheres often a tinge of humor. Occidental art, in contrast to art in the Orient, has until lately been afraid of the flash of humor in its serious works. But a growing acquaintance with Chinese painting is surely liberating in our poets and painters a happy sense of the disproportion of man to his assumed place in the universe, a sense of the tortuous grotesque vanity of the individual. By this weapon, man helps defend his intuition of the Absolute and of his own obscure but real relation to it.

The Spectric method is as yet in its infancy; and the poems that follow are only experimental efforts toward the desired end. Among them, the most obvious illustrations of the method

are perhaps Opus 41 by Emanuel Morgan and Opus 76 by Anne Knish.

Emanuel Morgan, with whom the Spectric theory originated, has found the best expression of his genius in regular metrical forms and rhyme. Anne Knish, on the other hand, has used only free verse. We wish to make it clear that the Spectric manner does not necessitate the employment of either of these metrical systems to the exclusion of the other.

Although the members of our group would by no means attempt to establish a claim as actual inventors of the Spectric method, yet we can justifiably say that we have for the first time used the method consciously and consistently, and formulated its possibilities by means of elaborate experiment. Among recent poets in English, we have noted few who can be regarded in a sure sense as Spectrists.

ANNE KNISH.



# SPECTRA

ANNE KNISH

*Opus 50*

**T**HE piano lives in a dusk  
Where rich amber lights  
Quiver obscurely.

It exists only at twilight;  
And somewhere afar  
In the depths of a tropic forest  
The sun is now setting, and the phoenix looks  
Mysteriously toward the gold.

I think I must have been born in such a forest,  
Or in the tangle of a Chinese screen.

There is indigo in this music;  
This dusk is filled with amber lights;  
Through the tangled evening of heavy flower-  
scents  
Come footfalls  
That surely I can almost remember.

## EMANUEL MORGAN

*Opus 41*

SPECTRES came dancing up the wind,  
Trailing down the long grass,  
Shooting high, undisciplined,  
To join the sun and see you pass . . .  
The colors of the pointed glass.

Under a willow-maze you went  
Unsaddened . . . But a violet beam  
Fell on the white face, backward bent,  
Of a body in a stream.

Into the sun you came again,  
With sun-red light your feet were shod . . .  
And round you stood a ring of feathered men  
With naked arms acknowledging a god.

Indigo-birds and squirrels on a tree  
And orioles flashed in and out . . .  
The yellow outline of Eurydice  
Waited for Orpheus in a black redoubt.

---

With a beaded fern you waved away a gnat . . .  
And maidens, hung with vivid beads of  
green,  
One of them bearing in her arms an orange cat,  
Held palms about a queen.

Then you were lost to sight  
And locking trees became the clouds of you,  
Till you emerged, the moon upon your shoulder,  
and the night  
Bloomed blue.

## ANNE KNISH

*Opus 76*

**Y**EARS are nothing;  
Days alone count;  
These, and the nights.  
I have seen the grey stars marching,  
And the green bubbles in wine,  
And there are Gothic vaults of sleep.

My cathedral  
Has one great spire  
Tawny in the sunlight.  
Gargoyles haunt its nave;  
High up amid its dark arches  
Forgotten songs live shadowy.  
Gold and sardonyx  
Deck its altars.  
Its mighty roof  
Is copper rivering with the rain.

Tomorrow lightning swords will come  
And thunder of cannon.  
They will unrivet this roof

---

Of mighty copper.  
Before the eyes of my gargoyles,  
In the sound of my forgotten songs,  
They will take it.  
And as the rain sluices down  
I shall have to follow my roof into the war.

## EMANUEL MORGAN

*Opus 15*

**D**ESPAIR comes when all comedy  
Is tame  
And there is left no tragedy  
In any name,  
When the round and wounded breathing  
Of love upon the breast  
Is not so glad a sheathing  
As an old brown vest.

Asparagus is feathery and tall,  
And the hose lies rotting by the garden-wall.

## ANNE KNISH

*Opus 118*

**I**F bathing were a virtue, not a lust,  
I would be dirtiest.

To some, housecleaning is a holy rite.  
For myself, houses would be empty  
But for the golden motes dancing in sunbeams.

Tax-assessors frequently overlook valuables.  
Today they noted my jade.  
But my memory of you escaped them.

## EMANUEL MORGAN

*Opus 7*

**B**EYOND her lips in the dark are a man's  
feet

Composed and dead . . .

In the light between her lips is a moving  
tongue-tip sweet,

Red.

Her arms are his white robes,

They cover a king,

His ornaments her crescent lobes

And two moons on a string.

*Sheba, Sheba, Proserpina, Salome,*

*See, I am come!—king, god, saint!—*

*With the stone of a volcano O show that you  
know me,*

*Pound till the true blood pricks through the  
paint!*

Twitch of the dead man's feet if he remembers

A bunch of grapes and a ripped-open  
gown.—



---

And the live man's eyes are night after embers,  
Two black spots on a white-faced clown . . .

And in the dawn, lava . . . rolling down . . .  
Down-rolling lava on an up-pointing town.

## ANNE KNISH

*Opus 67*

I WOULD not in the early morning  
Start my mind on its inevitable journey  
Toward the East.  
There are white domes somewhere  
Under that blue enameled sky, white domes,  
white domes;  
Therefore even the cream  
Is safest yellow.  
Cream is better than lemon  
In tea at breakfast.  
I think of tigers as eating lemons.  
Thank God this tea comes from the green  
grocer,  
Not from Ceylon.

## EMANUEL MORGAN

*Opus 13*

**O** PEACOCK-FEATHER  
Drawn through a death-dim hole,  
With colors blurred together,  
Persian pattern of a soul—

Is it enough to have belonged  
To the exaltation of a bird  
Round whom they thronged  
Each time her high tail stirred?

. . . I loved a woman whose two eyes,  
One blue, one gray,  
Would block  
Like cliffs my foothold in the skies . . .  
She is dead, they say—  
Dead as a peacock.

## ANNE KNISH

*Opus 126*

**H**IS eyes  
Are the resurrection.  
Once when beneath the moonrise  
They looked into mine,  
Grey mists held mastery between us,  
And I knew that his soul  
Had gone down into death.  
But tonight a golden star-dust  
Is pouring through space,  
And the mist is burned away by it.  
Tonight his soul awakens  
Out of its splendid cerements,  
And through his eyes the miracle  
Arises to the earth.

I have prayed long beside the tomb  
And touched the grave-cloths  
With living fingers.  
I have lain my breasts  
Against the granite

---

Of the sarcophagus  
Where he was.  
Prayers for the dead I offered up  
And hecatombs.

Today there was a wonder in the sunrise.  
I knew that there were glories in the sky  
And new branches of willow on the earth.  
And my soul trembled with prophecy.

I prophesied  
The resurrection.  
Now it has come.  
And I lie shaken  
Before its tumult.

## EMANUEL MORGAN

*Opus 2*

**H** OPE  
Is the antelope  
Over the hills;  
Fear  
Is the wounded deer  
Bleeding in rills;  
Care  
Is the heavy bear  
Tearing at meat;  
Fun  
Is the mastodon  
Vanished complete . . .

And I am the stag with the golden horn  
Waiting till my day is born.

## ANNE KNISH

*Opus 151*

CANDLE, candle,  
Flicker and flow—

I knew you once—

But it was not long ago,

it was

Last night.

And you spoiled my otherwise bright

evening.

## EMANUEL MORGAN

*Opus 62*

**T**HREE little creatures gloomed across the  
floor

And stood profound in front of me,  
And one was Faith, and one was Hope,  
And one was Charity.

Faith looked for what it could not find,  
Hope looked for what was lost,  
(Love looked and looked but Love was blind),  
Charity's eyes were crossed.

Then with a leap a single shape,  
With beauty on its chin,  
Brandished a little screaming ape . . .  
And each one, like a pin,

Fell to a pattern on the rug  
As flat as they could be—  
And died there comfortable and snug,  
Faith, Hope and Charity.



---

That shape, it was my shining soul  
Bludgeoning every sham . . .  
O little ape, be glad that I  
Can be the thing I am!

## ANNE KNISH

*Opus 131*

I AM weary of salmon dawns  
And of cinnamon sunsets;  
Silver-grey and iron-grey  
Of winter dusk and morn  
Torture me; and in the amethystine shadows  
Of snow, and in the mauve of curving clouds  
Some poison has dwelling.

Ivory on a fan of Venice,  
Black-pearl of a bowl of Japan,  
Prismatic lustres of Phœnician glass,  
Fawn-tinged embroideries from looms of  
Bagdad,  
The green of ancient bronze, cinereous tinge  
Of iron gods,—  
These, and the saffron of old cerements,  
Violet wine,  
Zebra-striped onyx,  
Are to me like the narrow walls of home  
To the land-locked sailor.

---

I must have fire-brands!  
I must have leaves!  
I must have sea-deeps!

## EMANUEL MORGAN

*Opus 16*

**D**EATH on a cross was not the blade  
In Mary's heart . . .  
For the mother of man and the son of the maid  
Had walked one night apart,  
When his beard was not yet grown—and,  
afraid,  
She had seen his young words dart.

Between a mother and a son,  
The guillotine . . .  
It falls, it falls, and one by one,  
Unseeing and unseen,  
They face the great sharp shining ton  
That time has eaten green.

Between the shoulder and the head  
The guillotine must play  
And cleave with clash unmerited  
The generating clay . . .  
Till the separated parts, not dead,  
Rise and walk away.

## ANNE KNISH

*Opus 134*

**L**ISTEN, my friend,  
That you may understand me.—

In my earliest youth  
I dreamed in hues volcanic.  
I saw each day open  
Like a curtain of flame.  
Black slaves attended  
My waking moments;  
Three ebony slaves  
Washed sleep from my white body.  
Three ebony slaves  
Around my ivory smoothness  
Folded heavy robes  
Of crimson and white.  
And as I issued forth  
Into the blue vault of the daylight  
A grey ape pranced before me  
And a leopard crept behind.

This was the state  
Of my young heritage.  
Scarlet as the voice of trumpets  
Was the pageant of my days.  
Can I accept now  
The twilight?  
And soon the dark, where all colors  
Die?

Before I die, I will hold one last revel!  
I will have golden cups and poppy curtains!—  
And yet—

No! . . . In a black hall  
The black table shall spread far down before  
me  
And all the feasters garbed in black.  
Then, at the feast's height, I arising  
Shall with a gesture like the midnight  
Throw back my midnight robe and suddenly  
stand  
Naked, the sole white flame of the world.

## EMANUEL MORGAN

*Opus 63*

**T**HE seven deathly spears of memory  
Setting behind a god, a golden glorious  
Halo of land and sea  
Even for you and me,  
Even for us . . .

The spear of Egypt,  
Orange,  
Through the sleeping lid,  
With all the power of the bulk of a pyramid.

The spear of Chile,  
Yellow,  
Through the thrilling cheek,  
With all the push of an upturned Andean peak.

The spear of Thibet,  
Violet,  
Through the eager hand,  
The thrust of the iron of a silent land.

The spear of the Ice-Poles,  
Green,  
Through the warm-breathing breast,  
The glacial east and the glacial west.

The spear of Norway,  
Blue,  
Through the curved arm-pit,  
The cheerless sun majestic in a jagged slit.

The spear of India,  
Indigo,  
Through the holy side,  
A heaven-touching temple-roof down a mountain-slide.

The spear of Europe,  
Red,  
In the mouth's breath,  
The million-splintering scream of death . . .

Even to us,  
The seven-spearing sun,  
The sword of separation before our love is  
done;  
Even for us,  
A simian shape



Throwing seven souls on the sea-wet cape;  
Even for us  
Who smile mouth to mouth,  
The full tornado from the seven-forked south;  
Even to us  
Who clasp with our knees,  
The scattering upheaval of the seven cold seas!

And this is as near as lovers ever come,  
Their words are dumb;  
This is as near as they have ever kissed,  
Their lips are ocean-mist.

Yet what avail the seven  
Spears of memory  
Against the obstinate archery  
Of light, the spears of heaven?

## ANNE KNISH

*Opus 40*

I HAVE not written, reader,  
That you may read. . . .  
They sit in rows in the bare school-room  
Reading.  
Throwing rocks at windows is better,  
And oh the tortoise-shell cat with the can tied  
on!  
I would rather be a can-tier  
Than a writer for readers.

I have written, reader,  
For abstruse reasons.  
Gold in the mine . . .  
Black water seeping into tunnels . . .  
A plank breaks, and the roof falls . . .  
Three men suffocated.  
The wife of one now works in a laundry;  
The wife of another has married a fat man;  
I forget about the third.

## EMANUEL MORGAN

*Opus 31*

THE night is growing deep with snow . . .  
O put your hand in mine,  
While the mirthful secrets that we know  
Bloom in the fire-shine—  
Flakes falling with an undertow  
Of delicate design.

Hushed are the courts where ladies went  
Unquestioning to quaff  
Goblets of liquid firmament—  
Thank God that we can laugh!

Hushed are the plains where Asia poured  
The blood of peacock kings—  
But we can echo, thank the Lord,  
What the China teapot sings:

*Nothing bereaves  
The eternal tune  
Of little crisp leaves  
Green in the moon.*

The night is deeper still with snow . . .

O let us never stir

From the mirthful secrets that we know

Of old diameter!

Eve laughed at Adam long ago,

And Adam laughed at her.

## ANNE KNISH

*Opus 150*

SOUNDS, pure sounds—  
Nothing—  
Vibrancies of the air—  
And yet—

This summer night  
There are crickets shrilling  
Beyond the deep bassoon of frogs.  
They cease for a moment  
As the rattling clangor  
Of the trolley  
Bumps by.  
I hear footsteps  
Hollow on the pavement  
Now deserted  
And blank of sound.  
They die.  
The crickets now are sleeping;  
Even the leaves  
Grow still.

And slowly  
Out of the blankness, out of the silence,  
Emerges on soundless wings  
The long sweet-sloping  
Rise and fall of far viol notes,—  
The mad Nirvana,  
The faint and spectral  
Dream-music  
Of my heart's desire.

## EMANUEL MORGAN

*Opus 29*

**K**NIVES for feet, and wheels for a chin,  
And the long smooth iron bore for a  
neck,

And bullets for hands. . . . And the root runs in,  
The root of blood no stone can check,  
From the breasts of the grinding crash of sin,  
From engines hugging in a wreck.

A thousand round-red mouths of pain  
Blaring black,  
A twisting comrade on his back  
In a round-red stain,  
Clotted stalks of red sumac,  
Discs of the sun on a bayonet-stack . . .

Blood, flame, a cataract  
Thrown upward from a desert place:  
Flame and blood, the one blind fact,  
Contained, or spouting from the face,  
Or coiling out of bellies, packed  
In a stinking spent embrace . . .

Country, a babble of black spume . . .  
Faith, an eyeball in the sand . . .  
Mother, a nail through a broken hand—  
A kissing fume—  
And out of her breast the bloody bubbling milk-  
red breath  
Of death.



## ANNE KNISH

*Opus 96*

YOU are the Delphic Oracle  
Of the Under-World.

As we sit talking,  
All of us together,  
You flash forth sudden utterance  
Of buried things  
That writhe in obscure life  
Within our minds' last darkness.  
That which we think and say not  
You say and think not.  
In us these thoughts  
Like worms stir vilely.  
But from you they depart as sudden butterflies  
Crimson and green against the pure sky.

Many are the revelers;  
Few are the thyrsus-bearers;  
And sole is Dionysus.

This I inscribe to you,  
Singer,  
In memory of the crags of Delphi  
And the Thessalian vales beyond.

## EMANUEL MORGAN

*Opus 40*

TWO cocktails round a smile,  
A grapefruit after grace,  
Flowers in an aisle  
. . . Were your face.

A strap in a street-car,  
A sea-fan on the sand,  
A beer on a bar  
. . . Were your hand.

The pillar of a porch,  
The tapering of an egg,  
The pine of a torch  
. . . Were your leg.—

Sun on the Hellespont,  
White swimmers in the bowl  
Of the baptismal font  
Are your soul.

## ANNE KNISH

*Opus 88*

SO we came back again  
After some years—  
Just revisiting  
The scenes of our sin.  
Nothing is there but the garden;  
And we had expected  
That we would be there.

I heard a wind blowing  
Down the sky.  
It came with heavy auguries  
And passed.  
There was a soothsayer once in Rome  
Who on a white altar  
Inspected the purple entrails of victims.

## EMANUEL MORGAN

*Opus 47*

**G**IVER of bribes in the brightness of  
morning,  
Cities have wavered and rocked and gone  
down . . .  
But the lamps of the altars hang round you,  
adorning  
The niche of your neck and the drift of your  
gown.

O bribe-giver, marked with purple metal—  
Cut in your naked contentment there shows  
On the curve of your breast one carven petal  
From heaven's impenetrable rose!

You open the window to myriad windows,  
The high triangular door of the world . . .  
Till the walls and the roofs and the curious  
keystone,  
The carven rose with its petals uncurled,

Are swayed in the swathe of the uppermost  
ether,  
Where stars are the columns upholding a  
dome,  
And the edifice rolls on a corner of ocean,  
Lifts on a wave, poises on foam . . .

We stand on the rose, we are images golden,  
We move interchanging, attaining one crest:  
One chin and one mouth and one nose and one  
forehead,  
One mouth and one chin and one neck and  
one breast . . .

I pull you apart from me, struggle to bind you,  
I free you, I rend you in seven great rays . . .  
And we cling to them all . . . but we lose  
them, and slowly—  
We slip with the rainbow down the blue  
bays.

## ANNE KNISH

*Opus 122*

UPSTAIRS there lies a sodden thing  
Sleeping.  
Soon it will come down  
And drink coffee.  
I shall have to smile at it across the table.  
How can I?  
For I know that at this moment  
It sleeps without a sign of life; it is as good as  
dead.  
I will not consort with reformed corpses,  
I the life-lover, I the abundant.  
I have known living only;  
I will not acknowledge kinship with death.  
White graves or black, linen or porphyry,  
Are all one to me.  
And yet, on the Lybian plains  
Where dust is blown,  
A king once  
Built of baked clay and bulls of bronze  
A tomb that makes me waver.

## EMANUEL MORGAN

*Opus 46*

I ONLY know that you are given me  
For my delight.  
No other angle finishes my soul  
But you, you white.

I know that I am given you,  
Black whirl to white,  
To lift the seven colors up . . .  
Focus of light!



## ANNE KNISH

*Opus 1*

## REITERATION! . . .

The seconds bob by,  
So many, so many,  
Each ugly in its own way  
As raw meats are all ugly.  
Why do we feed on the dead?  
Or would at least it were with cries and lust  
Of slaying our human food  
Beneath a cannibal sun!  
But these old corpses of alien creatures! . . .  
I loathe them!  
And too many heads go by the window,  
All alien—  
Filers of saws, doubtless,  
Or lechers  
Or Sabbath-keepers.  
Morality comes from God.  
He was busy.

He forgot to make beauty.  
Why does he not call back into their hen-house  
This ugly straggling flock of seconds  
That trail by  
With pin-feathers showing?

## EMANUEL MORGAN

*Opus 55*

WHY ask it of me?—the impossible!—  
Shall I pick up the lightning in my  
hand?

Have I not given homages too well  
For words to understand?—

Words take you from me, bring you back again,  
Dance in our presence, cover your proud face  
With the incredible counterpane,  
Break our embrace . . .

No, not to you  
Your wish,  
But to some kangaroo  
Or cuttle-fish

Or octopus or eagle or tarantula  
Or elephant or dove  
Or some peninsula  
Let me speak love—

Or call some battle or some temple-bell  
Or many-curving pine  
Or some cool truth-containing well  
Or thin cathedral—mine!

## ANNE KNISH

*Opus 200*

IF I should enter to his chamber  
And suddenly touch him,  
Would he fade to a thin mist,  
Or glow into a fire-ball,  
Or burst like a punctured light-globe?  
It is impossible that he would merely yawn and  
    rub  
And say— “What is it?”

## EMANUEL MORGAN

*Opus 17*

**M**AN-THUNDER, woman-lightning,  
Rumble, gleam;  
Refusal,  
Scream.

Needles and pins of pain  
All pointed the same way;  
Parallel lines of pain  
When the lips are gray  
And know not what they say:  
Rain,  
Rain.

But after the whirl of fright  
And great shouts and flashes,  
The pounding clashes  
And deep slashes,  
After the scattered ashes

---

Of the night,  
Heaven's height  
Abashes  
With a gleam through unknown lashes  
Of delicious points of light.

## ANNE KNISH

*Opus 191*

**T**HE black bark of a dog  
Made patterns against the night.  
And little leaves flute-noted across the moon.

I seemed to feel your soft looks  
Steal across that quiet evening room  
Where once our souls spoke, long ago.

For that was of a vastness;  
And this night is of a vastness . . .

There was a dog-bark then—  
It was the sound  
Of my rebellious and incredulous heart.  
Its patterns twined about the stars  
And drew them down  
And devoured them.



## EMANUEL MORGAN

*Opus 45*

**A**N angel, bringing incense, prays  
Forever in that tree . . .  
I go blind still when the locust sways  
Those honey-domes for me.

All the fragrances of dew, O angel, are there,  
The myrrhic rapture of young hair,  
The lips of lust;  
And all the stench of dust,  
Even the palm and the fingers of a hand burnt  
bare  
With a curling sweet-smelling crust,  
And the bitter staleness of old hair,  
Powder on a withering bust . . .

The moon came through the window to our  
bed.  
And the shadows of the locust-tree  
— On your white sweet body made of me,  
Of my lips, a drunken bee. . . .

O tree-like Spring, O blossoming days,  
I, who some day shall be dead,  
    Shall have ever a lover to sway with me.  
For when my face decays  
    And the earth moulds in my nostrils, shall  
        there not be  
    The breath therein of a locust-tree,  
    The seed, the shoot of a locust-tree,  
    The honey-domes of a locust-tree,  
    Till lovers go blind and sway with me?—

O tree-like Spring, O blossomy days,  
To sway as long as the locust sways!

## EMANUEL MORGAN

*Opus 14*

**B**ESIDE the brink of dream  
I had put out my willow-roots and  
leaves  
As by a stream  
Too narrow for the invading greaves  
Of Rome in her trireme . . .  
Then you came—like a scream  
Of beeves.

## ANNE KNISH

*Opus 80*

**O**H my little house of glass!  
How carefully  
I have planted shrubbery  
To plume before your transparency.  
Light is too amorous of you,  
Transfusing through and through  
Your panes with an effulgence never new.  
Sometimes  
I am terribly tempted  
To throw the stones myself.

## EMANUEL MORGAN

*Opus I*

THEY enter with long trailing of shadowy  
cloth,  
And each with one hand praying in the air,  
And the softness of their garments is the gray-  
ness of a moth—  
The lost and broken night-moth of despair.

And they keep a wounded distance  
With following bare feet,  
A distance Isadoran—  
And the dark moons beat  
Their drums.

More desolate than they are Isadora stands,  
The blaze of the sun on her grief;  
The stars of a willow are in both her hands,  
And her heart is the shape of a leaf.

And they come to her for comfort  
And her black-thrown hair

Is a harp of consolation  
Singing anthems in the air.

With the dark she wrestles, daring alone,  
Though their young arms would aid;  
Her body wreathes and brightens, never  
thrown,  
Unvanquished, unafraid . . .

Till light comes leaping  
On little children's feet,  
Comes leaping Isadoran—  
And the white stars beat  
Their drums.

## ANNE KNISH

*Opus 195*

**H**ER soul was freckled  
Like the bald head  
Of a jaundiced Jewish banker.  
Her fair and featurous face  
Writhed like  
An albino boa-constrictor.  
She thought she resembled the Mona Lisa.  
This demonstrates the futility of thinking.

## EMANUEL MORGAN

*Opus 6*

**I**F I were only dafter  
I might be making hymns  
To the liquor of your laughter  
And the lacquer of your limbs.

But you turn across the table  
A telescope of eyes,  
And it lights a Russian sable  
Running circles in the skies. . . .

Till I go running after,  
Obeying all your whims—  
For the liquor of your laughter  
And the lacquer of your limbs.



## EMANUEL MORGAN

*Opus 9*

WHEN frogs' legs on a plate are brought  
to me  
As though I were divinity in France,  
I feel as God would feel were He to see  
Imperial Russians dance.

These people's thoughts and gestures and con-  
cerns  
Move like a Russian ballet made of eggs;  
A bright-smirched canvas heaven heaves and  
burns  
Above their arms and legs.

Society hops this way and that, well-taught;  
But while I watch, in cloudy state,  
I feel as God would feel if he were brought  
Frogs' legs on a plate.

## ANNE KNISH

*Opus 187*

I DO not know very much,  
But I know this—  
That the storms of contempt that sweep over  
us,  
Ready to blast any edifice before then  
Rise from the fathomless maelstrom  
Of contempt for ourselves.  
If there be a god,  
May he preserve me  
From striking with these lightnings  
Those whom I love.

Saying which,  
Zarathustra strolled on  
Down Fifth Avenue.

The last three lines  
Are symptomatic.

## EMANUEL MORGAN

*Opus 104*

**H**OW terrible to entertain a lunatic!  
To keep his earnestness from coming  
close!

A Madagascar land-crab once  
Lifted blue claws at me  
And rattled long black eyes  
That would have got me  
Had I not been gay.

## ANNE KNISH

*Opus 182*

**H**E'S the remnant of a suit that has been  
drowned;  
That's what decided me," said Clarice.  
"And so I married him.  
I really wanted a merman;  
And this slimy quality in him  
Won me.  
No one forbade the banns.  
Ergo—will you love me?"

## EMANUEL MORGAN

*Opus 101*

**H**E not only plays  
One note  
But holds another note  
Away from it—  
As a lover  
Lifts  
A waft of hair  
From loved eyes.

The piano shivers,  
When he touches it,  
And the leg shines.

## ANNE KNISH

*Opus 181*

**S**KEPTICAL cat,  
Calm your eyes, and come to me.  
For long ago, in some palmèd forest,  
I too felt claws curling  
Within my fingers . . .  
Moons wax and wane;  
My eyes, too, once narrowed and widened . . .  
Why do you shrink back?  
Come to me: let me pat you—  
Come, vast-eyed one . . .  
Or I will spring upon you  
And with steel-hook fingers  
Tear you limb from limb. . . .

There were twins in my cradle. . . .

## EMANUEL MORGAN

*Opus 78*

I AM beset by liking so many people.  
What can I do but hide my face away?—  
Lest, looking up in love, I see no eyes or lids  
In the gleaming whirl of clay,  
Lest, reaching for the fingers of love,  
I know not which are they,  
Lest the dear-lipped multitude,  
Kissing me, choke me dead!—

O green eyes in the breakers,  
White heave unquieted,  
What can I do but dive again, again—again—  
To hide my head!

## ANNE KNISH

*Opus 135*

**I**N a tomb of Argolis,  
Under an arch of great stones,  
Where my eyes were sightless, groping,  
I touched this figment of clay.

Forgotten vase of immemorial Greece,  
Colorless form!  
I have entered to the blind dark  
Of the tomb where you have slept forever  
And with the dreams of my importunate hands  
I touch you in the profound darkness.

You are cold and estranged;  
Yet the ends of my fingers cling to your porous  
surface.  
You are thin and very tall;  
My palm can cover your mouth.  
Your lip curves but a little;  
Around your throat  
My two hands meet,



---

And then part as I follow the swelling  
Rhythm that downward widens,  
And I pass around and under,  
And the returning line  
Ebbs home.

Beneath your feet I touch cold marble;  
My hand returns  
To sleep upon your breast  
Dreaming it warm.

## EMANUEL MORGAN

*Opus 79*

**O**NLY the wise can see me in the mist,  
For only lovers know that I am here . . .  
After his piping, shall the organist  
Be portly and appear?

Pew after pew,  
Wave after wave . . .  
Shall the digger dig and then undo  
His own dear grave?

Hear me in the playing  
Of a big brass band . . .  
See me, straying  
With children hand in hand . . .

Smell me, a dead fish . . .  
Taste me, a rotten tree. . . .  
Someday touch me, all you wish,  
In the wide sea.







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