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| Klein, A.M. (1909-1972) |
| Abraham Moses Klein |
| A.M. (Abraham Moses) Klein was a Canadian modernist best known for his poetry depicting Jewish and French Canadian experiences in the first half of the twentieth century. A central figure in Jewish-Canadian culture, many of his poems represent Jewish identity and heritage, themes he sought to reconcile with a modernist desire to break from history. Klein also wrote short stories, novels, and literary essays, including several on James Joyce's *Ulysses,* besides practicing as a lawyer.  Klein was born on February 14, 1909 in Ratno, Ukraine. As a young child his family immigrated to Montreal's working-class Jewish district, a setting that inspired much of his later poetry. From 1926 to 1930, Klein studied at McGill University, where he was influenced by the McGill Movement, a modernist literary circle founded by A.J.M Smith, F.R. Scott, and Leo Kennedy. While a student at McGill, Klein published works in several magazines and co-founded the literary magazine *McGilliad*. A lawyer by profession, Klein went on to study law at the Université de Montréal (1930-1933) after graduating from McGill. In 1928 Klein became involved with the Zionist organization Canadian Young Judaea as an educator and writer. Later he wrote for and edited the Zionist Organization of Canada's magazine, *The Canadian Zionist,* and *The* *Canadian Jewish Chronicle*. He also worked as a speechwriter for Samuel Bronfman, President of the Canadian Jewish Congress. |
| A.M. (Abraham Moses) Klein was a Canadian modernist best known for his poetry depicting Jewish and French Canadian experiences in the first half of the twentieth century. A central figure in Jewish-Canadian culture, many of his poems represent Jewish identity and heritage, themes he sought to reconcile with a modernist desire to break from history. Klein also wrote short stories, novels, and literary essays, including several on James Joyce's *Ulysses,* besides practicing as a lawyer.  Klein was born on February 14, 1909 in Ratno, Ukraine. As a young child his family immigrated to Montreal's working-class Jewish district, a setting that inspired much of his later poetry. From 1926 to 1930, Klein studied at McGill University, where he was influenced by the McGill Movement, a modernist literary circle founded by A.J.M Smith, F.R. Scott, and Leo Kennedy. While a student at McGill, Klein published works in several magazines and co-founded the literary magazine *McGilliad*. A lawyer by profession, Klein went on to study law at the Université de Montréal (1930-1933) after graduating from McGill. In 1928 Klein became involved with the Zionist organization Canadian Young Judaea as an educator and writer. Later he wrote for and edited the Zionist Organization of Canada's magazine, *The Canadian Zionist,* and *The* *Canadian Jewish Chronicle*. He also worked as a speechwriter for Samuel Bronfman, President of the Canadian Jewish Congress.  Klein’s first book of poetry, *Hath Not a Jew* (1940)*,* contains poems from the 1920s and 1930s addressing his Jewish community’s culture and experience of anti-Semitism. In the 1940s, Klein associated with poets in the Montreal based PreviewGroup (F. R. Scott, P.K. Page, and Patrick Anderson) and the First Statement Group (including Irving Layton); Klein also lectured in poetry at McGill University. In 1944, *The Hitleriad*, a satirical poem about Nazi Germany’s threat to European Jews, and *Poems* werepublished. Shifting his focus from Jewish culture, Klein wrote his first unpublished novel in 1946, *Comes the Revolution* (retitled *That Walks Like a Man*), inspired by the Igor Gouzenko affair of Soviet espionage in Canada. Klein's next volume of poetry, *The Rocking Chair and Other Poems* (1948), depicted Quebec's French-Canadian community and won the Governor-General's Medal (1949).  Involved in politics, Klein was nominated in 1944 as the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) candidate in Montreal-Cartier, Quebec. He withdrew from the 1944 race, and later ran unsuccessfully for the position in 1949.That year, however, the Canadian Jewish Congress sponsored Klein's travels to Israel, Europe, and North Africa, and over the next three years he lectured on the State of Israel throughout Canada and America. He described his early travels in ‘Notebook of a Journey,’ published in *The* *Canadian Jewish Chronicle.* Inspired by his visit Israel and witnessing European and North African refugee camps at the end of World War Two, Klein's only published novel, *The Second Scroll* (1951)*,* recounts a contemporary search for a Messiah to guide the Jews to the Promised Land.  Klein became depressed while writing *The Second Scroll* and attempted suicide in 1954. He soon ceased writing and withdrew from public life, including resigning from practicing law in 1956. On August 20, 1972, Klein died in his sleep. Several of his short stories and poems were published posthumously.  [File: A.M.Klein.jpg]  Figure 1 A. M. Klein  <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/pam_archives/public_mikan/index.php?fuseaction=genitem.displayItem&lang=eng&rec_nbr=3217809&rec_nbr_list=3217809>  [kleinscroll.jpg]  Figure 2 Group portrait of (l to r) Monroe Abbey, Saul Hayes, and A. M. Klein, Publication of A. M. Klein's ‘The Second Scroll,’ Montreal. November 1951.  http://www.cjhn.ca/en/explore.aspx?q=A.+M.+Klein  Selected Works  Letters *A.M. Klein: The Letters* (in progress)  Notebooks  *Notebooks: Selections from the A.M. Klein Papers* (1994)   Poetry  *Hath not a Jew* (1940)  *Poems* (1944) *The Hitleriad* (1944)  *Seven Poems* (1947) *The Rocking Chair: and Other Poems* (1948)  *The Collected Poems of A. M. Klein* (1974)  *A.M. Klein: The Complete Poems* (1990)  *Doctor Dwarf and Other Poems for Children* (1990)  Essays  *Beyond Sambation: Selected Essays and Editorials, 1928-1955* (1982)  *Literary Essays and Reviews* (1987)   Novels  *The Second Scroll* (1954)  Short Stories  *The Short Stories of A.M. Klein* (1983) Drama Hershel of Ostropol in Canadian Jewish Chronicle (1939) Translations From Palestine to Israel (1951) Of Jewish Music, Ancient and Modern (1952) Adaptations Conscience (1952) |
| Further reading:  (Caplan)  (Kattan)  (Kaufman)  (Marshall)  (Pollock, A.m. Klein: The Story of the Poet)  (Pollock, Caplan and Rozmovits, A.m. Klein: An Annotated Bibliography )  (Seymour and Klein) |