



## The Second Scroll (Works)

*A.M. Klein*

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The Second Scroll, the only novel by poet A.M. Klein, is an ambitious and complex work that interlaces prose, poetry, drama, and commentary. The narrative follows a Canadian Jew to the newly established state of Israel on a double mission - to collect the emerging national literature and to search for his Uncle Melech Davidson, a Holocaust survivor. Klein creates a modern Torah out of the uncle's crises of faith as he attempts to come to terms with the atrocities of the Second World War. The five chapters of The Second Scroll mirror the books of the Pentateuch (the 'first scroll') and the language is rich with biblical, talmudic, kabbalistic, and literary allusions as both the narrator and his uncle wrestle with the meaning of Jewish identity, messianic faith, and homecoming.

Popham and Pollock's scholarly edition re-creates the feel of the Knopf publication of 1951-now a collector's item-but restores the text to Klein's original vision. This includes echoing the architectural structure of the Sistine Chapel in the physical layout of 'Gloss Gimel,' Klein's powerful commentary on Michelangelo's famous ceiling. Extensive annotations, and appendices that cross-reference the finished book to the raw material gathered during the author's trip to Israel and to the fund-raising speeches he delivered on his return, give the reader access to the process by which the novel took shape. A significant addition to UTP's Collected Works of A.M. Klein, and of interest not only to Klein scholars, The Second Scroll marks the inception of Holocaust literature and holds a central place in the Canadian literary canon.

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