

# Latest campus lit mag issues "merit second look"

By OTAV LOMBARDO

While everyone was busy taking a breather between essays and exams, *Existere* and *Eat Me, Literally* were busy publishing new issues of their literary magazines. Though the two magazines differ greatly in style and philosophy, both issues merit a second look.

*Existere* is continuing its evolution as a revamped magazine, a project which began in earnest last fall. This issue opens with a piece called "Invasion" by Kate Reider-Collins, a well-written poetic vignette focusing on the thoughts and visions inspired by a windy park. The piece is placed adjacent to David Berger's portrait of a man and child, a photograph which seems to capture visually some of the images Reider-Collins expressed in words.

The magazine's longest work is G. Richard Gustafson's "Nanabush resting on a rock." This well-structured long poem captures an authentic, native Indian style in a story which deals with a hunting adventure. At this point, and with a

few minor exceptions, the current issue of *Existere* seems to concentrate its focus on matters of spirituality.

Scott Garbe is first to hint at it with his guilt-ridden church doorman in "Breathing." njk's "stones" attacks the subject in reference to the artistic foundations of one's literary *raison d'être*. Deirdre Hanna's "Legend of the True Cross," and mw's "A Crow seeks Converts" deal with meaningless suffering and the empty shells religions have become in contemporary society.

David Parsons' haunting portrait of a woman presents its subject against the background of shadowy figures which appear to represent her inner doubts. Seen in this light, the work provides a visual counterpoint for themes put forward in some of the written work.

A superficial look at *Eat Me, Literally* (*EML*) reveals a magazine which seems the very antithesis of *Existere*. *EML*'s contributors appear to represent a group of writers who refuse to be constrained by

formality, and who therefore use the magazine as a workshop for honing their skills and for engaging in experimentation.

The first two pages present short poetry, some of which sounds as if it were meant to be spray-painted in the York tunnels rather than put in a magazine. The remainder of the magazine goes where most straight-laced academics dare not tread: the realm of science fiction.

It starts off *scary*, with James MacDougall's account of an aged human pendulum. Scott Bruce's "poisoned planet" captures, in disintegrating language, the potentially dark fate of our own planet. Tim Archer offers one of the magazine's more memorable works. His untitled story repackages an old theme—castration anxiety—in a macabre new format. In the piece, a woman takes the penis of a husband she wishes to divorce and gives it to her dog.

Relationship anxiety is further explored in Jim Smith's "Give 'em a TV and Jam 'em Together Yah." The



phallic tribute to the federal government's controversial Bill C-54, an anti-pornography bill which many people in the arts feel will seriously threaten artistic freedom, and which the *EML* editors have strenuously opposed. At the end of this issue, the editors have reproduced two pages of correspondence between the magazine, the government, and opposition leaders. The curt response from Prime Minister Mulroney's office is an interesting contrast to the lengthier, more personal, responses from the NDP and the Liberals.

poem explores one of adultery's most dangerous fruits: the dark, deadly side of possessiveness.

But the best work in this *EML* is editor G. Richard Gustafson's story, "The Opener." In the story, repeating images unfold to reveal a convulsing man dying in the middle of a brain operation. Not exactly pretty, but very, very well done.

The cover of the issue is an ironic,

On the whole, the editors of *EML* should be congratulated. Their new issue goes where no pen constrained by academic conformity could go. The work presented in this issue of *EML* shows that science fiction need not be an engineer's dreamworld. In the process, the editors and authors have shown themselves capable of exploring new frontiers in groundbreaking new ways. I'm sure the more mainstream academic community will catch up sooner or later.

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