

## Editor's Note

ON A FEBRUARY EVENING FLANKED BY SNOWBANKS AND WITH temperatures topping out at zero, an extraordinary new *NER* event lit up the Middlebury College Concert Hall. In the first of a new series we call “NER Out Loud,” eight students from the college Oratory Society assembled on stage, each taking their turn to read a selection from the past year’s pages. Not only did the students read these pieces, but they embodied them. They put themselves into the written words fully, not in a theatrical way so much as in a purely vocal way, each word given its moment of breath, each phrase shaped by a clear voice. An ASL interpreter stood beside them and offered the words through sign and gesture, for the hearing and non-hearing alike. Authors tend to have complicated, long-term relationships with their texts and can’t help but to approach them as such when they read aloud. These students had only the words themselves, just as they were published, and so were able to offer something much closer to the experience of solitary reading. To listen to them was to have the unusual sense that the real joy of reading, of language activating the mind, could be shared. Coached by theater professor and playwright Dana Yeaton, each one approached the text with poise, clarity, and commitment. After the final poem, once voices then hands went silent, we all gathered in the art center lobby to dig into s’mores and to browse *NER* and three student-made lit mags, without getting too much marshmallow on them. We also heard s’more readings (pun very much intended), this time with students presenting their own work from the pages of their magazines.

It was an ambitious plan for *New England Review*, and it certainly would not have happened without Dana Yeaton, or without the efforts of the Mahaney Center for the Arts, or without the sheer energy of the student orators. But it also would not have happened without the support of our generous and thoughtful donors, who keep *NER* going year after year and urge us to try new things. In this case they not only pitched in for the hot chocolate and the ASL interpreter, but also made it known, early on, that they’d like to see more interaction between *NER* and Middlebury’s students. We have this great journal, well-known on a national level, why not share it more broadly right here on campus? With that idea in mind, and with much cogitation and collaboration, NER Out Loud was born.

With this issue we’ll be launching new e-editions, in all formats, through Sheridan Press’s Shelfwise—also with thanks to one of our donors. Now people who prefer reading on electronic devices or who need a copy of *NER* right now can get it more easily than they ever have before. Other supporters, who recognized our work with emerging writers, asked, how can we help you support emerging writers even more? Because of that conversation, this summer *NER*

author Ricardo Nuila will be the first to attend the Middlebury Bread Loaf Writers' Conference on the new *NER* scholarship.

Middlebury College publishes this magazine as part of its mission to educate and challenge students, and “to connect our community to other places, countries, and cultures.” But Middlebury wouldn't do it without backup. Without these individual supporters there would be no e-editions, no readings, and no payment for writers. There would be no stipends for editors and no website. There would be no s'mores.

And so as is our tradition, we'd like to call them all by name here in the first issue of the new volume. —CK

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