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Mauricio Novoa, Class of 2014

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Abstract

In the current issue of *Next Page*, Mauricio Novoa, Class of 2014 and winner of the Silent Leader Award, tells us which authors' discourse on race has inspired him and what poet Marianne Moore has taught him about writing.

Keywords

Musselman Library, Gettysburg College, reading, books, interview

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In the current issue of Next Page, Mauricio Novoa, Class of 2014 and winner of the Silent Leader Award, tells us which authors' discourse on race has inspired him and what poet Marianne Moore has taught him about writing.



Mauricio Novoa '14 (right) greets Michael Eric Dyson at a Gettysburg College celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

Do you have a favorite book or literary character or from your childhood?

I don't know if I have any clear-cut favorites, but I remember going to Target a few months back and being really excited to see [Where the Sidewalk Ends](#) by Shel Silverstein on the shelves. I guess I've always had a thing for poetry. Also the Berenstain Bears and the Goosebumps books had a special place in my childhood.

What book or article has recently inspired you to take action?

Most recently I've read [Assata: An Autobiography](#) by Assata Shakur, which detailed many issues in the justice system, race issues, gender issues, etc. Also, I've read a few speeches by Malcolm X, such as "[Ballot or the Bullet](#)" and "Message to the Grass Roots." Being a Latino, race is always at the forefront of my mind, so readings on race usually pique my interest.

What book have you recently recommended to a friend to read? Why?

While down in Tuskegee, AL for an immersion trip, I met a woman by the name of Barbara Ann Howard who was involved in the student movement and *The Southern Courier* magazine in the 1960s, and she had never heard of Assata Shakur, so I recommended her autobiography. Seeing as Ms. Shakur was a woman who fought courageously for her people, I thought my new friend Ms. Howard would appreciate the book.

As a contributor to the *Surge* blog and an English major, is there a particular author who has influenced your writing?

I have gotten into reading James Baldwin a lot after taking a few classes with Professor Melton (Waddup Professor!) and I feel like I try to emulate him a lot. I also really enjoy reading the works of Junot Díaz as he writes most of his fiction from the perspective of poor Latinos in America trying to figure out how to live and survive in the places this country often forgets about. But my main focus is poetry, and I have discovered many new poets through classes with Professor Meyer (Waddup Professor!), but I really enjoy the works of Marianne Moore as I feel like she really taught me that you can truly do what you want with the words on the page and create your own work of art. Tupac Shakur is also a big influence on my poetry.

How do you find time to read for fun?

Surprisingly, I've never been much of a reader. A lot of it stems from my background where my peers didn't deem it "cool" to read, but I try to set aside times when I have nothing else going on to try and correct that. Breaks are usually good for that. Weekends too. Other than that, it's pretty difficult, especially since my attention span is so short.

What do you plan to read next?

Up next, I have [*Just Above My Head*](#) by James Baldwin, which is a long one. I also have [*Drown*](#) by Junot Díaz. Other than that, I think I'll have my fill of literature in the classes I'm taking this semester.

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