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English Class takes part in public reading of *Beloved*
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If you walked through DUC on Feb. 20, you probably came upon an unusual sight—a microphone and podium surrounded by students and professors listening to someone read aloud. By now, we're used to club recruiters and credit card hecklers hanging around the first floor of DUC, but what on earth was the microphone and podium for? What you saw was the Marathon Book Reading of Toni Morrison's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *Beloved*, about a mother and daughter trying to rebuild their lives after escaping from slavery when a mysterious young woman, whose name gives the novel its title, finds them.

The event was set up so that students and others could take turns reading from the novel. The reading went from 8 a.m. until they finished. For being the first time for a reading like this on campus, plenty of people showed up to take part in it. Dr. Angela Jones, an assistant professor in the English Department, said, "They had more students than they knew what to do with." Jones said she scheduled her entire day around the reading.

For many students, this was their first time participating in a public reading. Kirby Watkins, a junior English major from Hendersonville, Tenn., said, "It's an important novel because it tackles the issues of slavery head-on. Using a ghost story as a base, Morrison created a setting that emphasizes all the horrors that accompany slavery." Watkins is one of many students currently enrolled in the Honors English class called "Transatlantic Gothic Literature" that were able to participate in this reading as a part of the course.

Morrison's *Beloved* is on the course syllabus for later this semester, and a trip to Cincinnati to visit the Freedom Trail Museum is in the works to accompany the class's reading of this powerful novel.

Due to the great turnout, more public book readings are sure to come. Not only do students have a chance to take part in a unique experience like a Marathon Book Reading but they are also exposed to some of the great works in literature.