

## An Invitation to Read

We at PINAWOR are seeking help when we read our written work to the audience. We hope to learn how to make our poems, stories, or novels become worthy of publication; meanwhile through reading to members we enjoy receiving recognition for our efforts.

Are you reluctant about reading your work? Why be silent? Granted, reading aloud before an audience requires some courage but your familiar material is right in front of you, and you wrote it, you know what you intend it to say.

With preparation, you can muster courage for the task. Write your best effort, then rehearse. Read it aloud, record it and listen to yourself; you may discover changes you can make.

Then bear in mind you will read to an audience of volunteers who are curious, want to hear what you have to say, and want, where necessary, to help you improve your work.

You're thinking, but I clutch up, get stage fright. Many of us do. What can you do? One key to building confidence is practice, a second is relaxation.

When it's your turn to read, take deep breaths on your way up to the lectern, arrange your papers, look around at the audience, find a friendly face, smile, grip the lectern, and start talking. Like swimming in cool water, after you plunge in and thrash around a bit, you warm up and can enjoy yourself.

Strive to read at a normal rate with sufficient volume. Adapt rhythm in your talking, giving the audience the oral markers the written punctuation provides to your readers.

Be proud of your work, try looking up at your audience while you read, glimpse listener reaction. Try making eye contact, look around, and when you find a friendly face you can return the smile. Looking at your audience gives clues to how well your reading is going over. You will be able to judge if you're going too fast, too slow, too low, or have everything moving smoothly.

Reading aloud to PINAWOR members, you have no hecklers but you may be thinking this is a tough audience, composed of many experienced writers more qualified than you. All the better: you're reading to friendly sympathetic people who want to analyze your effort with intent to help. They won't put you down.

The strength of this audience lies in its variety and the various experiences of our members; it's a microcosm of the world outside the room.

Lou Sartor  
May 1994