## “Taking Control of Our Lives: Reading, Writing, Transforming” Bryn Mawr College Book Group, Riverside Correctional Facility, Winter-Spring 2014 “In *Pedagogy of Freedom* Freire states, ‘I like being human because I know that . . . my destiny is not given but something that needs to be constructed and for which I must assume responsibility.’ We assume responsibility for our crimes. We believe that we are the products of our decisions and actions, and we recognize ourselves as such. This represents the transformation of the prison system from within…. education in prison is the vehicle through which we meditate, analyze, and transform ourselves and, ultimately, society from the inside-out” (Anke Pinkert and students, “The Transformative Power of Holocaust Education in Prison: A Teacher and Student Account.” *Radical Teacher* 95, Spring 2013).

## “…in fiction I could explore what in my own life seemed impossible to challenge. In fiction I could examine alternative states of consciousness and find meaning in differing points of view” (Susan Rosenberg, *An American Radical: Political Prisoner in My Own Country*, 2011).

“In the writing, they can be the women they were before incarceration, or would like to be after….In so doing, they are doing dangerous things with words: resisting the narrative that society has scripted for them. The writers…construct selves that are rooted in their deepest beliefs and desires of who they are….They construct worlds, better ones than they experienced prior to being booked and locked up…. In these re-created spaces, justice has a chance, children are loved and protected, women walk without fear, drugs do not exist, forgiveness reigns, and love flies free.” (**Ann Stanford, “Where Love Flies Free,” *Journal of Prevention and Intervention in the Community*. October 8, 2008**).

In this workshop, we will use reading and writing as pleasurable, necessary and meaningful tools for understanding and change. Offering the opportunity to work on literacy skills and critical problem solving, and for individual reflection, we will read different kinds of writing by women, and use our own writing as a tool for reflecting on the reading and for understanding our own lives. Reading and re-reading, writing and re-writing stories can empower us to reclaim and reimagine ourselves.

**We will meet 1-3 p.m. on 12 Fridays**: Jan. 31, Feb. 7, Feb. 21, Feb. 28, Mar. 7, Mar. 21, Mar. 28, Apr. 4, Apr. 11, Apr. 18, Apr. 15 and May 2. [On March 14 we will be on Spring Break.] If you attend and participate in **@ least EIGHT of these classes**, and do the reading and writing assignments, **you will get a certificate of completion**. We also welcome others to join us who might not be able to complete the full program.

**We will select texts that include poetry, memoirs, drama, and fiction**   
(including a graphic novel). Possibilities include  
Maya Angelou, "Phenomenal Woman"  
Jeanette Winterson, *The Glass Castle*  
Dorothy Allison, *Two or Three Things I Know For Sure*  
Sandra Cisneros, *The House on Mango Street*  
Marjane Sartrapi, *Persepolis*  
Toni Morrison, *Sula*

**Some other texts we might bring in to “think with”:**  
Michelle Fine, **et.al, "**[Participatory Action Research:   
From Within and Beyond Prison Bars"](http://serendip.brynmawr.edu/exchange/system/files/private/Fine%2C%20Working%20Methods.pdf)   
Paolo Friere, “[Reading the World and Reading the Word](http://www.jstor.org.proxy.brynmawr.edu/stable/41405241)”  
Megan Sweeney, *The Story Within Us: Women Prisoners Reflect on Reading*Matt Thompson,[Five Reasons Why People Code Switch](http://www.npr.org/blogs/codeswitch/2013/04/13/177126294/five-reasons-why-people-code-switch)  
Eve Tuck, “[Suspending Damage: A Letter to Communities](http://jakeyspdfs.pbworks.com/f/Eve+Tuck_HEdPress.pdf)”