

Mary's Pence Summer Reading List 2016

POWERFUL MEMOIRS

Negroland

Margo Jefferson (2015)

Suggested by Jennifer Longergan, Founder and Executive Director of Mary's Pence grantee Artistri Sud working in Temuco, Chile, which empowers women around the world with global entrepreneurship training.

This memoir explores the intricacies of growing up in Negroland, "a small region of Negro America where residents were sheltered by a certain amount of privilege and plenty." The book touches on themes of race, sex and culture, as well as important moments in history. It tells Jefferson's own story of growing up among the Black elite in Chicago and the tension she feels with a community struggling to balance privilege and identity.

In Order to Live: A North Korean Girl's Journey to Freedom

Y. Park (2015)

Suggested by Kay Sweeney, Founder and Managing Director of Mary's Pence grantee Kateri Tekakwitha in Chimaltenango, Guatemala, which annually sponsors the education of 20 young indigenous women.

Park was born into the middle class of North Korea, but her family was forced into poverty when her father was arrested for selling metal on the black market. Poor and malnourished, Park and her mother escaped to China with the help of a man who later sold them into sex slavery. Again they escaped, crossing the Gobi Desert with stars as their guide, eventually making it to South Korea. Park hopes sharing her story will inspire others to advocate for human rights.

The Buddha and the Borderline: My Recovery from Borderline Personality Disorder through Dialectical Behavior Therapy, Buddhism, and Online Dating

Kiera Van Gelder (2010)

Suggested by Tomilyn Ward, Founder and Executive Director of MAYA Organization of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, a Mary's Pence Grantee that provides counseling for incarcerated women.

This memoir is about one woman's lifelong struggle with Borderline Personality Disorder. Her belated diagnosis after 20 years of drug addiction, self-harm, depression, and wild romantic relationships begins the long journey to overcome the daily challenges of BPD. Her story provides an understanding of life with BPD and hope for those suffering and their family and friends.

TRUTH IN FICTION

Unaccustomed Earth

Jhumpa Lahiri (2008)

Suggested by Nivedita Chandrappa, Founder and Executive director of Mary's Pence grantee Wishwas in Queens, New York, working to create a clothing cooperative in partnership with immigrant Bangladeshi women.

This collection of eight short stories is about the relationships between characters, many who are immigrants to the United States. Lahiri highlights the unique struggles they face, especially surrounding identity, within a mixed cultural environment. The complexity of arranged marriages is explored in several of the stories. Lahiri received the Frank O'Connor International Short Story Award for this book.

The Joy Luck Club

Amy Tan (2006)

Suggested by Mary Lim-Lampe, Lead Organizer of Mary's Pence grantee Genesis in Oakland, California, who said "It was the first time I ever saw my story in print."

This novel tells the story of four mothers and four daughters who are Chinese immigrants living in San Francisco. Feeling deeply the loss and despair of leaving their home country, the women start what they come to call The Joy Luck Club, where they gather to play mahjong for money and share food. The book is a series of vignettes told in turn by each of the women about their own lives and their relationships.

Bloodchild and Other Stories

Octavia Butler (2005)

Science fiction writer Octavia Butler was suggested by Meg Eubank, Executive Director of Welcoming the Stranger in Warminster, Pennsylvania, which provides immigrant and refugee populations with educational and training opportunities.

This is a great first read for those who have never encountered Octavia Butler before. This series of seven stories is science

fiction that captures the essence of the human experience. The writing is clear, accessible and sophisticated, and deeply thought-provoking. Her stories, which leave an intense emotional impact, have won Hugo Awards and a Nebula Award. This book was also a New York Times Notable Book.

GLOBAL CHANGE-MAKERS

Brush with Haiti

Kathleen A Tobin (2012)

Suggested by Renate Schneider, ESPERA liaison in Haiti, who appears in the book.

This book is a look at the struggles many Haitians have faced and continue to face as they strive to improve their lives. Tobin teaches Latin American history, and in this book makes the argument for why it is important to educate students about Haiti. Tobin is working in Haiti to relieve poverty, and her acts are an inspiration to anyone working for reform. For another excellent book about Haiti, but one that takes place before the 2010 Earthquake, read ***Walking on Fire: Haitian Women's Stories of Survival and Resistance*** by Beverly Bell.

Seeds of Freedom: Liberating Education in Guatemala

Clark Taylor (2012)

Suggested by Taylor Harwood, 2015-2016 Saint Joseph Worker Volunteer at Mary's Pence.

Taylor is a social justice activist who tells the story of indigenous families in Santa Maria Tzeja, a remote Guatemalan village that originally had few options for economic development and practically no education opportunities. This story is an example of the theory of liberating education in practice. In the course of a generation the village families see nearly every child being educated, including many who go on to get a university education. These children turned into young social justice leaders with self-confidence and political consciousness and are creating change in the systems that oppress them politically, socially, and economically.

From Outrage to Courage: The Unjust and Unhealthy Situation of Women in Poor Countries and What They Are Doing about It

Ann Firth Murray (2007)

Murray takes a comprehensive look at the systemic problems that cause disparity through the lens of health issues faced by women of every age across the globe. She provides examples of proven models for change that focus on women organizing in their communities. This book is well-researched but accessible, and is part of a course on international development and women taught by the author who is a professor at Stanford University.

PEACE AND HOPE

Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict

Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan (2011)

In this book, Chenoweth and Stephan present empirical evidence that nonviolence is the most effective means for social change. The combination of data, case studies and clear writing and analysis of a wide variety of violent and nonviolent conflicts powerfully demonstrates that nonviolence actually works. This book was named the winner of the 2013 Grawemeyer Award for Ideas Improving World Order.

The Sacred Ego: Making Peace with Ourselves and Our World

Jalaja Bonheim, Ph.D (2013)

Suggested by Rita Lampe, new Mary's Pence Board Co-Chair from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Jalaja Bonheim, Ph.D is an author and speaker whose work inspires psychologists, social workers, business leaders, religious leaders and peace activists alike. In *The Sacred Ego* Jalaja connects spirituality, activism and feminism. Her experience as a Jewish child in post-war Germany inspired her to explore the root causes of warfare and to shape solutions. She won the Grand Prize in the 2015 Nautilus Awards which go to exceptional literary contributions to spiritual growth, conscious living, high-level wellness, green values, responsible leadership, and positive social change. She was also awarded the Gold Medal in the category of Social Change.

Hope in the Dark

Rebecca Solnit (2004, 2006)

This is a short read that offers insight to activists – both those who march in the streets and those whose small daily actions contribute to a better world. It is a refreshingly optimistic take on activism that points out the ease with which those who are resisting focus on failures and end up in despair. Solnit makes the case that change is not always immediate and she highlights the many ways in which activism has transformed our world over the course of decades.