



# Walking a Literary Labryinth: A Spirituality of Reading

*Nancy M. Malone*

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## **Walking a Literary Labryinth: A Spirituality of Reading** Nancy M. Malone

Who of us doesn't have a list of books that changed our life? Reflecting on her own reading life, Nancy Malone examines the influence of reading in how we define ourselves. Throughout, she likens the experience of reading to walking a labyrinth, itself a metaphor for our spiritual journey through life. The paths within the labyrinth are not straight, but winding, and in the end, it is not the small circle in the center that defines the self, but the whole grand design of the labyrinth—every experience, every person we meet, and every book we read—that makes us who we are.

Malone draws from diverse sources, both spiritual and secular—Virginia Woolf, Saint Augustine, E. E. Cummings, Paul Tillich, Nadine Gordimer, George Herbert, Sue Grafton, Henry James, George Eliot, James Joyce, Patrick O'Brien, E. M. Forster, Franz Kafka, Elie Wiesel, Margaret Atwood, and Tom Wolfe, to name a few. Her thoughtful and beautifully articulated examination of influential books takes in a broad range of subjects, including childhood reading; books as sacred objects; reading and social responsibility; “dangerous” reading, which challenges us to examine our prejudices and beliefs; poetry; and erotic literature. And Malone has compiled a recommended reading list to inspire readers to seek out the unfamiliar or return to old favorites.

In *Walking a Literary Labyrinth*, Malone invites all us readers, of every religious tradition, or none, to consider the influence of reading in our own lives—how and why particular books stay with us, how they shape us, and how they enlarge our humanity.

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