

# Julie Maloney

Dear Friend,

Happy August! Fasten your seatbelt. Summer's flying. With teaching, traveling, and leading two special international writing retreats, I've been SWOONING.

What makes you swoon?

If you are not sure, please take a moment and think about it. If you have not swooned in a while . . . ask yourself why?

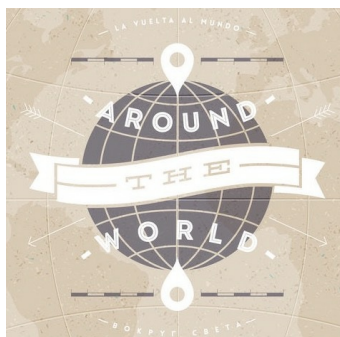
Do not take this lightly.

Swooning is mandatory to being alive. It requires breathing, awareness, and resolve.

Read on . . .

Love,  
Julie

Julie Maloney, Director  
WOMEN READING ALOUD



# CLOSE TO HOME OR NOT

## TRAVELING OR NOT

*What is travel if not an extended artist's date? Talk about refilling the well! Your senses are filled with so many new stimuli. In an article titled "[For a More Creative Brain, Travel](#)," the journalist Brent Crane explains that studies have shown how creativity is stimulated by the rewiring of the brain that occurs when people travel to new cultures. "Neural pathways are influenced by environment and habit, meaning they're also sensitive to change," Crane writes. "New sounds, smells, language, tastes, sensations, and sights spark different synapses in the brain and may have the potential to revitalize the mind."*

(This excerpt appeared in my mail.)

**It is not always possible to travel in body but it is possible to travel in mind and spirit. --**

**JM**



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## CHOOSE BRILLANCE

If you're not leaving your home base, you can still shake things up by stretching your imagination on the page. Or treat yourself to a tiramisu gelato or check out a local farm and buy an enormous zucchini . . . fry it up. You don't have to do this every night. Visit a museum. Go for the entire day alone. Browse the gift shoppe. Buy yourself a new writing journal. Begin with these words: "Today is the first day that I am ..."

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"(When you're writing) Slow down where it hurts."--**Steve Almond**

"All happy families are alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way."

--Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*

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"Make new friends even as you reconnect with old ones. My friend "Mary from Madeira" guided us through the island of Madeira, Portugal. Ten and eleven hour days affirmed how much the world has to offer as we were awed by nature's best.

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"Find your swoon."

--JM

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Visit: [www.womenreadingaloud.org](http://www.womenreadingaloud.org)

## Listen up! Watch this!

This small dance company from the Netherlands won an international dance competition via the WORLD OF DANCE. Watch this. Moving is a key element to swooning. Trust me.

I swoon every time I watch it.

CLICK BELOW:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=REPPgPcw4hk>



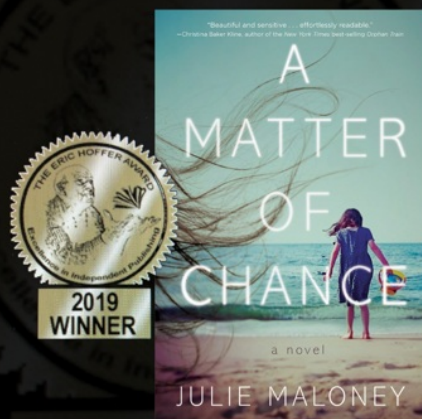


*"HOW WE SPEND OUR DAYS IS, OF COURSE, HOW WE SPEND OUR LIVES." -ANNIE DILLARD*

## AUDIO BOOK

I am thrilled with the narration of my audio book by Amanda Dolan. If you're pressed for time, don't stop reading. Reach for an audio book. If you prefer reading on your tablet, check out the ebook for "A Matter of Chance." Thank you, NYPublic Library.

*"... a gorgeously written story of heartache and hope."*



*"Maloney masterfully steers the reader toward a suspenseful and satisfying conclusion."*  
—Eric Hoffer Award



A Matter of Chance

A Novel

by Julie Maloney

EBOOK

## YOUTH AND HOPE

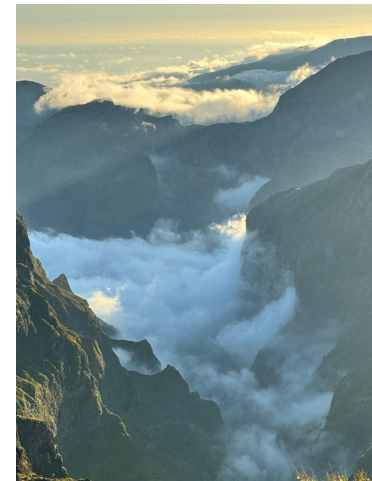
Last week, I sat down to interview my seventeen year-old granddaughter. She is the stepdaughter of my oldest daughter. I live in New Jersey and Addi lives in Indiana and so we do not get to see each other as often as I want to. This time, we reunited in Hilton Head, South Carolina.

She's a great kid. There's no doubt about it: Grade A student. Avid golfer. Believer in friendship. But what prompted me to ask if I could interview her was her youth. She's living in an unsettling world. One that she and her generation will inherit soon enough. I wondered what it took to be young and to hold on to self-worth and happiness in 2024. Ninety minutes later, I had an idea from one of my favorite interview personalities

But it doesn't happen." She doesn't trash-talk her fellow students or the teachers. "Kids in my high school have an entrepreneurial spirit. They have part-time jobs and they invest their money." I know. Privilege. But what I'm hearing is that this generation is trying to figure things out. My generation hasn't left them with the right guidebook and they know they must write their own.

"Because we have such a large high school, we have classes for everyone. Entrepreneurial, medical—this is what I'm on—the biomedical pathway." She adds, "We learn about naturalism—nature's impact on man." *I want to be in this class.*

"What about required reading? Book banning?



"Let's talk about social media. What do you think it's doing to your generation?" I ask her.

"It's a detriment. It wastes time. And it's tough on your mental health." And yet I see her scrolling the way I do because I'm wasting time too. We're all wasting time. How do we get our youth to understand that time is precious? That sooner or later, we'll all be gone.

I bring up Taylor Swift and

ever.

Addi will enter her senior year in high school in Westfield, Indiana, where there are approximately 3,000 students. “It’s the end of my childhood,” she says. Boom. She says it with awareness, not sadness. “I’m lucky. I have a best friend. Both of us value loyalty.” In the political world, this word is tossed around in an out-of-body context, but as we sit outside on the deck overlooking the water, she talks about the importance of “kindness” in their friendship. “I’m pretty sure we’ll be friends for life.” I ask her what makes a great friend. “Being a good listener,” she responds.



“I live a privileged life and I know it,” she says. It’s true. Golfing. Two golf carts sit in the garage. A saltwater pool is in back and the sun hits it just right each morning. “I know this means that I have to work hard. I can’t take it for granted. I see the adults around me work hard.” She’s in the honors program in her high school but she

What do you think of all of this?” I ask.

“I have a great English teacher who went ahead and assigned us a book that was banned. She was retiring and didn’t care.”

“Which book?”

“*Brave New World*” by Aldous Huxley, but our parents had to sign off on it.”

Permission to read. How did we get here? I think.

“We’ve read *The Great Gatsby* and a book by Sue Monk Kidd. Oh and I loved *To Kill A Mockingbird*. But I really don’t read that much. I like math and science. Then she adds, “I like to learn.”

If kids from Indiana like to learn, does this mean I can count on the kids where I live in New Jersey, thirty-five miles outside of New York City, to feel the same? And what about seventeen year-olds in Alabama, North Dakota, California and Colorado? I’m hopeful there’s a resounding Yes to this question. But then we move to politics and I get worried. I ask Addi how—if at all—the political scene in the country affects her generation.

“People my age are influenced easily. They identify with the person rather than the issues.”

How did she figure this out with such assurance?

the concert that she has tickets for in 2024. It’s a birthday gift and she’s taking her younger sister—her half-sister—who is only ten-years old.

“Taylor Swift is insanely smart,” Addi says. There it is again—that recognition that being smart is a gift and working hard means you have to use your gifts. “What brings you joy?” I ask as we begin to come to a close. “Having a purpose. Working hard and seeing the result. Enjoying the process.” It says something that this girl of privilege still knows that not everything comes easily to everyone. I love how she uses the word *process* in a knowing way. “What’s your biggest fear?” Without hesitation, she says, “Fear of failure. . . letting my parents down.”

“What’s your best asset?” I keep pressing.

“I’m disciplined and I know I’m a good friend too.”

Before the absolute end, I ask her if there’s any questions she might have for me – Grandma.

“How did you know Grandpa was *the one*?” I have fun with this but I want Addi to know that she is the priority in this interview and that I am grateful for her honesty and authenticity. The beauty of the conversation is that I felt that she loved being listened to because she had things to say.

doesn't raise her hand in class. "I know people are judging each other all the time."

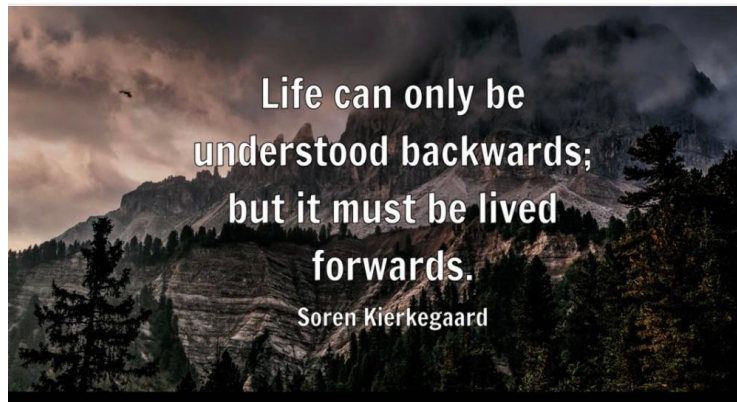
"Are you an introvert or an extrovert?" I ask.

"Definitely an introvert," Addi says. "There are about three or four kids who answer in class all the time. I feel sorry for the teachers because I know they're trying hard to get more of us to engage."



If this one seventeen year-old represents even a tiny portion of her generation—one composed of thoughtful people—there's hope for the future.

[Visit my website](#)





## FIND YOUR SWOON

Fend off distractions.  
Welcome silence.  
Go the gentler route.  
Look for the swoon.

What makes you swoon?

Somedays, it's hard to find the door to a swoon. What I do know is that if I go outside for a walk, I seize on possibility. When I walk inside the cemetery down the road, I memorize the names on the headstones: *Cohen, Gorelick, Epstein, Ecker, Esposito. Blynn*. Here, I remind myself never to stop the surge of a swoon. There isn't time.

Staring outside through a window will not guarantee a swoon. I want the vastness, the volume, the enormity of a giant swoon. I must feel the balance with my feet moving in time to my heartbeat. Do not confuse happiness with swooning. They are two different experiences. The heart peppers the swoon. Without the heart there is no possibility of even stumbling into a swoon. A swoon opens the gates to discovery. It may begin with happiness but unless freed it stops the flow. You may ask, "What's wrong with happiness?" Nothing. But why hold back? Continue the surge. From my toes to the crown of my head, I want the swoon. I want to say the words inside my head, "I am swooning. And it is oh so good."



Go and find your swoon. Look for it everywhere. It shows up sometimes in a line in a book or stretched across a rock formation or wrapped in the arms of a weeping willow tree. If you can't find it, look up. Sometimes, it's in the clouds. Or right in front of you in a cup of hot caldo verde – Portuguese green soup. Swoons are everywhere.

Don't put off finding yours.

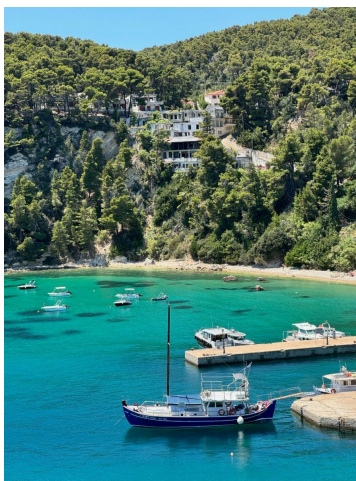
--Julie Maloney



## WE'RE WORKING



Big wild thanks to these writers who participated in the 29th writer's retreat - our first in England - hosted by WRA.



I love this work where I get to witness writers with different creative goals come together. I love leading a retreat. What's a retreat like hosted by WOMEN READING ALOUD? JOYFUL!

What did we do besides write and read aloud, listen and respond to what was working on the page? From our private ride provided by TILLIE'S COACHES where we were picked up in Windsor and driven to Bude in Cornwall, to a private tour of world-class Rosemoor Gardens, to

Of course, I walked in Cornwall in the cold and wet in England but there were green fields and sheep and believe me it was all quite glorious!

**Questions:**  
[julie@juliemaloney.net](mailto:julie@juliemaloney.net)



walking along the canal and up to the Castle and to sheep country . . . it was pure JOY.

And then I went to Greece and met more amazing writers who opened up their hearts and minds to participate in the 30th writer's retreat that I've led for WOMEN READING ALOUD.



*We're PLANNING  
WRA workshops  
and retreats.  
Stay tuned.  
We'd love  
to see you!*

*Stay connected.*

**CLICK HERE**

*[www.womenreadingaloud.org](http://www.womenreadingaloud.org)*



## WHAT FEEDS ME

**"I see a dream as something balancing precariously on a marshmallow. An idea grows legs and finds a heartbeat."  
--JM**

After two months away, I arrived home with a very special destination on my mind. I wanted to see the Kaethe Kollwitz exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. Kollwitz, Germany's most revered artist, influenced my work when I was writing my debut novel, *A Matter of Chance*. She was a champion for the oppressed; especially grieving mothers.

What we see from where we sit has always fascinated me. Choose your seat at the table wisely. Be heard. A good conversation--even between opposite sides--promotes understanding, clarification, and learning. The Falcon Hotel, in the town of Bude, England, was the venue for our 29th WRA writing retreat. What an historic and glorious place.



Following the writing retreat and a few days in London where I visited the Tate Museum and walked endlessly around Hyde Park, I flew to the island of Madeira, Portugal. I met my husband here where we stayed for one month in an Air BnB. Each day was a surprise. A gift. If you ever find yourself on this island, go to the Fanal Forest where magic reigns.

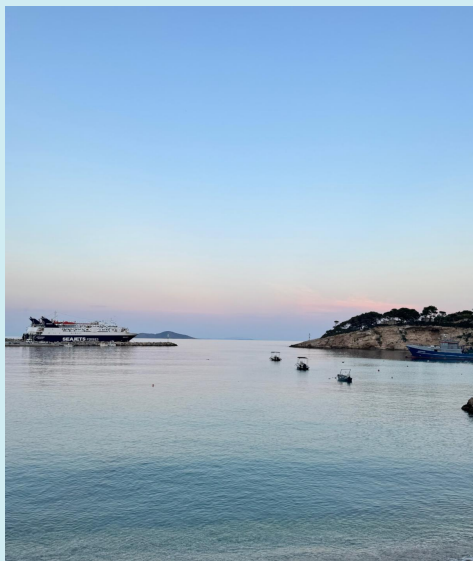
Find a forest.

Fill up.

Writers often write from a place of yearning. Good writing includes yearning in the story. It may not be obvious but it is there in between the lines on the page.

Acknowledge the yearning.

Writers tell me that magic happens when they attend a WRA writing retreat. Such a sentiment warms my heart. Each person contributes her own kind of magic. Given





the opportunity, with the right kind of support, we can find the magic at home or away. Here and now.

Find your community.

In the capital city of Funchal in Madeira, I visited the Museum of Sacred Art. Each of the six floors thrilled me. My new manuscript revolves around sacred art, so I spent a long time absorbing color, shape, design and subject.

As I am writing this in the beginning of August, I am humbled and grateful to the many people --wonderful people--who impacted me over these last months. Strangers and friends. Friends and strangers. The order never mattered.  
--JM



**"The world will not beg you to make art but it needs you to make art."**  
-- JM

**"It's the love of the thing that's essential. And if you love something, you're going to understand it. And if you understand it, you're going to learn a lot."**  
--John McGahern,  
Introduction to the classic novel,  
**STONER** by John Williams

**"Every morning between 9 and 12, I go to my room and sit before a piece of paper. Many times, I just sit for three hours with no ideas coming to me. But I know one thing: If an idea does come between 9 and 12, I am there ready for it."**  
--Flannery O'Connor

--JM



A

“Happy people can zoom out to see and fully enjoy the world around them. But that means standing up to the lie that you are the center of things. That is the essence of humility and a great secret to happiness.”

— Arthur C. Brooks

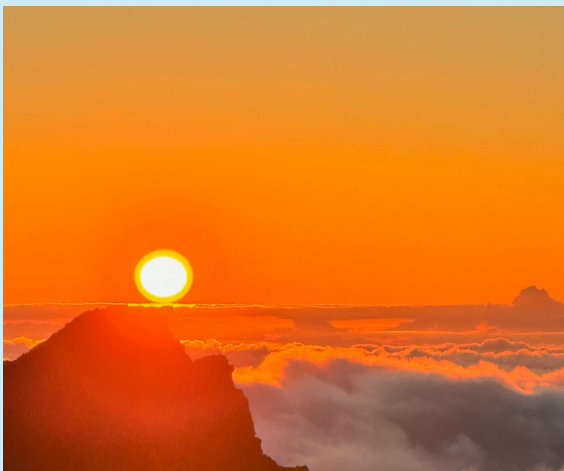
## WHAT I WANT IS DIFFERENT NOW

**swoon, noun/verb** - Today, this word has a positive connotation. 1. a few steps beyond being happy. 2. To feel a lot of pleasure.

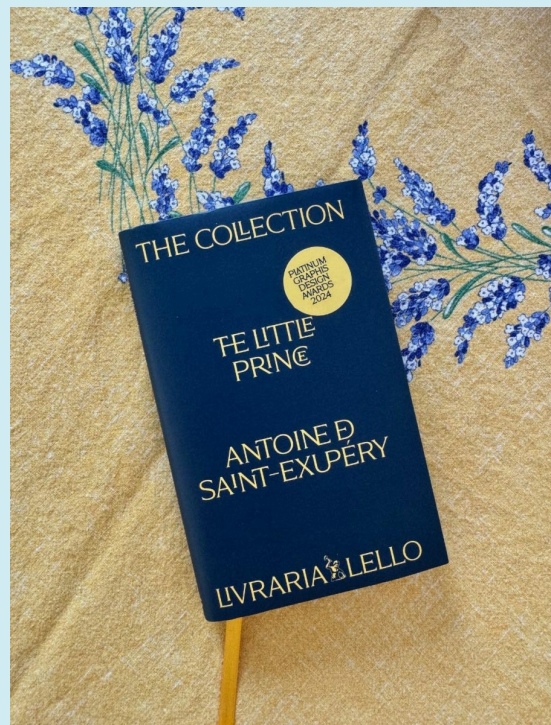
--Random House Webster's Dictionary

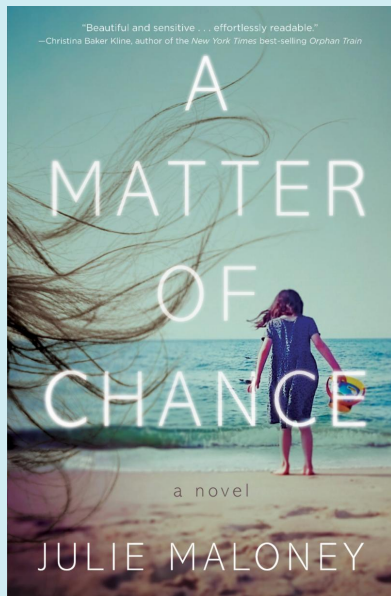
Yes. A sunset like this can make you swoon. Above the clouds. Pico do Arieiro. Look for it.

--JM



**So many fantastic books are published every day for children.** Here is a beautiful book from The Collection sold at the world-renowned bookstore in Porto, Portugal: [Livraria Lello](#). Of course, this story is sold everywhere. A classic. Originally published in 1943.





## Books make perfect gifts any time of year . . .

"Beautifully written and impossible to forget."

--**Caroline Leavitt**, author of the *New York Times* bestselling *Cruel Beautiful World*.

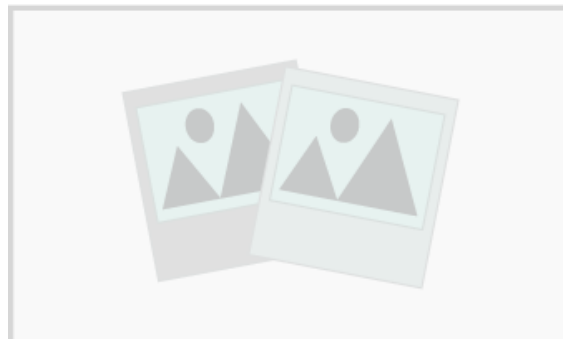
"Julie Maloney's debut novel is a remarkable, riveting journey."

--**Jacqueline Sheehan**, author of the *New York Times* bestselling *Lost and Found*.

ORDER NOW!

### Julie Maloney, Author

To learn more about the Author and the Book, please visit [www.juliemaloney.net](http://www.juliemaloney.net)



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