

Life is a contest between closeness and solitude. The referees favor solitude. We search for something to do, to listen to, to watch; some place to go. Friends sit around—so close—and ask, “What do you want to do?” We go to bars, and there pick our favorite board game, or shoot billiards, throw darts, guess trivia. Anything! Something! So close. For dates, we pick a film; a TV show. We sit close and watch. We go to church, and small talk our way out the door. We pass on the street and dart our eyes, careful to preserve our isolation. We skip the shoppe and use the virtual cart *in lieu*. We take the family out to dinner and choose the restaurant with TVs. We drive home, cursing the radio station, the stop light, and the fellow commuter. We walk in the door and shun the closest: “I just need some alone time.” We are alone. Yet so close. It’s our choice.