

ALONE

Why alone? Or how?

There is something sad, yet secure, in this being alone. You may be on the Tube, halted between South Kensington and Gloucester Road reading this, or at 39,000 feet, crammed in a middle seat on a Dreamliner, but you can feel as isolated as Michael Corleone in his mansion, looking out at the lake, or as alone as his brother Fredo at one end of his fishing skiff.

I had written a first draft of this book, to be called *Murder at the Movies*, with a half-menacing, half cheery blurb—“a panorama of mayhem, a miscellany of malice.” I was sitting in front of the screen and the text, and it was just me. You were a dream yet to come. Aren’t reading and writing proofs of solitude as the human condition, and our wish to escape?

Then all at once “I Was Sitting There Alone” came into my head like a breeze. The window was open.