Loneliness 1: George and Lennie
Different from the other ranch hands, “we got somebody to talk to that gives a damn about us” because they have each other.
George tells Slim, “I seen the guys that go around the ranches alone. That ain’t no good”, revealing that he benefits by avoiding their loneliness.
He says that he and Lennie “got kinda used to each other” and “it’s nicer to go around with a guy you know.”
When he kills Lennie, George makes sure that he dies happy, Lennie’s last words being, “Le’s get that place now” as George pulls the trigger behind his head.

Loneliness 2: Curley’s wife
She seems out of place with her “full, rouged lips”, “heavily made up” eyes, “red fingernails” and “red mules on the insteps of which were little bouquets of red ostrich feathers.” She is the only female on the ranch. Steinbeck makes her seem more friendless and remote by never giving her a name.
She announces her loneliness to the men, “Think I don’t like to talk to somebody ever’ once in a while? Think I like to stick in that house alla time?” She lashes out viciously because they do not want her to talk to them, calling them “a bunch of bindle stiffs” and claiming that she is only here because “They ain’t nobody else.”
In the barn with Lennie she pleads, “I never get to talk to nobody. I get awful lonely.” She is, perhaps, more friendless than anyone else. She confides in Lennie that she only married Curley to get away from home. The dream world that she lives in, the belief that she could have been a film star only isolates her further; her real world is lonely and miserable whilst her dream is unattainable.

Loneliness 3: Crooks
He is segregated in the barn, demonstrating racial discrimination of the 1930s.
Candy tells a story from Christmas when “they let the nigger come in that night.”
Excluded from the companionship that exists in the bunkhouse - no cards or chat. When he comes to speak to Slim about a mule’s foot, he does not enter - “the stable buck put in his head.”
At the beginning of Chapter 4, we see where and how he lives, his possessions including books as he reads instead of having company. “Crooks was a proud, aloof man” because he had no choice but to endure this prejudice and isolation. Consequently, he resents people invading his privacy, saying to Lennie, “This here’s my room...I ain’t wanted in the bunkhouse, and you ain’t wanted in my room.”
He regrets the way that he taunted Lennie, “A guy needs somebody - to be near him” and “a guy gets too lonely” and “A guy sets alone out here at night.”

Loneliness 4: The Ranch and Itinerant Workers
Soledad is Spanish for Loneliness. George and Lennie’s long walk there suggests the remoteness, and most scenes in the novel take place on the ranch, or about it. Visits to town are discussed but not narrated. The Boss is suspicious of George and Lennie’s friendship: “I never seen one guy take so much trouble for another guy”.
The workers are all nomadic and solitary, like the man used George’s bed before him, “he just quit, the way a guy will....just wanted to move.” When telling the details of the dream to Lennie, George describes ranch workers as “the loneliest guys in the world” with “no family” and “nothing to look ahead to.”
Slim talks to George of the rarity of guys travelling together and being friends “I don’t know why. Maybe ever’body in the whole damn world is scared of each other.”
The men on the ranch are all passing through except Candy and Crooks who are forced to stay because of their disabilities. No-one seems to have a family and they all go to town to pay for the temporary company of women.