

the GLOSS SOLITO

JAVIER ZAMORA

1. Did you enjoy the book? Rate it from 1 - 5.
2. What does the word “trip” mean to you? How does the word take form in the young Javier Zamora’s imagination in the opening of Chapter 1 and subsequent chapters?
3. The Spanish language is prominent in the memoir, including the use of the upside-down question mark. Which liberties does the author take to tell his story and show bilingual, bicultural, and biliterate communication, knowledge, and understanding? How is your understanding of the memoir influenced as you read two languages?
4. Discuss the relationships between Javier and his fellow travelers. Especially Chino, Patricia, and Carla.
5. To have a better understanding of Javier and his parents and what promoted their decisions it’s helpful to know about the Salvadoran Civil War which took place from 1979 to 1992 as well as the political and economical climate at the time. Does anyone in the group have anything to share around this?
6. Javier’s grandparents are prominent in both his upbringing and his preparation for his journey to the United States. What is his relationship with his grandparents? How is it sustaining for him, since his parents have already immigrated to the United States?
7. From Don Dago to others who remain unnamed, Javier relies on a network of coyotes to get him to America. What was your initial opinion on these coyotes? Did it change over the course of the memoir?
8. How much did you know about America’s immigration system before reading Solito? Did your view of the issue change? Why or why not?
9. This memoir is told from the perspective of the author as a nine-year-old boy. How do you think that adds to the narrative? Would the book have a different effect if it was the story of an adult’s journey?
10. At the end of the book Javier is separated from his new “family” by distance - he hasn’t seen any of them since they crossed. This book is a love letter to them hoping to bring them back into his life. Discuss how difficult writing this book would have been for him and how he is using it as an olive branch to find those that helped him.