Joseph Luzzi • Saramago, *Blindness*
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Please note: the below are only intended to help you "get inside" the book—please do not feel compelled to answer them in full, unless you wish to, and if there are questions or elements in the book that you don't understand, no worries, we will explain all when we meet for our Live Presentation on this new selection!

1. The Nobel Prize in Literature in 1998 was awarded to José Saramago "who with parables sustained by imagination, compassion and irony continually enables us once again to apprehend an elusory reality." How do you see this capacity for "parables sustained by imagination" at work in *Blindness* (1988)? How does this novel enable us "to apprehend an elusory reality"?

2. Why, of all possible forms of epidemic, do you think that Saramago chose blindness as the engine of his narrative? What does making his characters blind enable Saramago to achieve with his storytelling and his insights into his characters?

3. During the Covid pandemic, *Blindness* was often discussed and referenced. What element of it reminded you of your own experiences during Covid?

4. At one point in *Blindness* we read:

   The only miracle we can perform is to go on living, said the woman, to preserve the fragility of life from day to day, as if it were blind and did not know where to go, and perhaps it is like that, perhaps it really does not know, it placed itself in our hands, after giving us intelligence.

   What do you believe is the significance of this passage? How does it relate to the larger issues in the novel?

5. At another point in the novel we read:

   You never know beforehand what people are capable of, you have to wait, give it time, it's time that rules, time is our gambling partner on the other side of the table and it holds all the cards of the deck in its hand, we have to guess the winning cards of life, our lives.

   How would you relate this quote to the central themes of *Blindness*?

6. The characters in *Blindness* are unnamed. Why?

7. What is ultimate image of human nature that emerges from the novel?

8. What role does religion play—or *not* play—in the novel? Please give an example of an episode in which religion, or the lack thereof, seems to drive the narrative.

9. How do issues of social class shape the interactions of the characters? How does the epidemic of blindness change the idea of socioeconomic rank and division?

10. Do you believe that the narrative of *Blindness* can be applied to the world today? If so, how?

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