

## ★ **I Am Yours: A Shared Memoir**

**Reema Zaman**

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“Long ago I stopped trying to explain you to anyone,” Reema Zaman says to her imaginary interlocutor, addressed simply as “Love.” Caught “somewhere between formed and forming,” Zaman archives a personal journey that’s intimate and attuned to a wider cultural moment. A staggering work filled with presence, *I Am Yours* provides a profound explanation of love, delivered as an act of witness.

In Bangladesh, Zaman’s family rose through the socio-economic ranks, from poverty to brushing shoulders with the world’s one percent, due to her father’s work at the UN. An astute, empathic observer by the time she graduated high school, Zaman witnessed a world of difference, inside and outside her home. For university, she embarked to the US to study acting, intending to use it as a form of activism. Inevitably, her path lead to New York City.

But these are dry facts. They don’t begin to touch on the substance and meaning that Zaman finds in their scope.

An epistolary to love, Zaman’s story is stunning. In a never-ending test to prove herself worthy, she achieves and achieves. Yet, frequently, her achievement feeds a punishing internal voice or makes her a target for external punishment. The sexism, assault, and fundamental violence she experiences because of fat phobia, race, misogyny, and patriarchy—all the shattering particulars of her life—are shown as no more than the warp and weft of any system that insists womanhood should simultaneously make and break a person.

Toward the end, Zaman determines that “sometimes, a scrap of sentence is the match that lights a flame. If I ever write a book, it will be to give all of us more than a hurried line of love.” Powerfully vulnerable and eloquent, Zaman’s voice is a fire—full-throated, wide-open, and roaring.

LETITIA MONTGOMERY-RODGERS (January/February 2019)

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