Shara McCallum was born in Jamaica to an African Jamaican father and a Venezuelan mother and moved to the United States with her family when she was nine. A professor of English and the director of the Stadler Center for Poetry at Bucknell University, McCallum is the recipient of a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. Her work considers the intersections of race, gender, history, and personal identity; in an interview, she noted that "poetry helps me explore the ways we understand complex notions of identity, whether that's personal, familial, or cultural."