

# Madwoman

Shara McCallum



Haunting, alarming, transformative, and elusive, these poems bridge together the gaps between development stages: from girl, to woman, and then mother. With the complexities that intertwine them, can you be all three at once? Who shapes our identity, and who is in control here? How do we recognize, acknowledge, and honor the changing of who we are?

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## Praise for Madwoman:

“Shara McCallum is like a great marathoner traversing myth, mind, and memory. Her work steers us through the heart of troubled landscapes, as well as the landscapes of the troubled heart. ‘In the country where she lives which is no country, the madwoman maps desire’s coordinates onto her body,’ she writes in this wise, fiery new collection. There are no other poets writing with McCallum’s beautiful intensities of form and feeling.

—Terrance Hayes

“These wonderful poems open a world of sensation and memory. But it is a world revealed by language, never just controlled. The voice that guides the action here is openhearted and openminded—a lyric presence that never deserts the subject or the reader. Syntax, craft and cadence add to the gathering music from poem to poem with -to use a beautiful phrase from the book, ‘each note tethering sound to meaning.’”

-Eavan Boland

## Alice James Books

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## A poem from Madwoman:

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### Red

I've been wrong about you so long.  
You're not the colour of war  
on Kingston streets. When you stain,  
you become rust. You cheat  
even the flame tree, more orange  
in truth than you in your crimson,  
your scarlet robes. Not even  
the poppy contains you.  
Not even one hundred huddled  
in the field. Maybe  
like you I am a liar. Or memory  
is a story I keep telling myself.  
But I understand, being as you are  
from a long line of women  
who regard facts as suggestion,  
who know what it is to burn  
inside the closet of night.  
Which is why, when I reach for you  
and you careen from me  
the nearer you come  
to my yellow, my alabaster skin,  
I still croon your name.  
I still insist on you, my lovely,  
my death, my life.



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Shara McCallum is originally from Kingston, Jamaica, and is the author of five books of poetry. Recognition for her poetry includes a Witter Bynner Fellowship from the Library of Congress and a National Endowment for the Arts Poetry Fellowship. Her poems and personal essays have been published in literary magazines, anthologies, and textbooks in the US, the UK, the Caribbean, Latin America, and Israel and have been translated into Spanish, French, and Romanian. Since 2003, McCallum has been the director of the Stadler Center for Poetry and a Professor of creative writing and literature at Bucknell University.

## Publicity and Events

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