

Press Release # 55
For Immediate Release:

Carmen Maria Machado is the winner of the 2015 Diverse Writers and Diverse Worlds Grants from the Speculative Literature Foundation

Fiction writer, critic and essayist Carmen Maria Machado has received the 2015 Diverse Writers and Diverse Worlds Grants from the Speculative Literature Foundation. The two \$500 awards support any purpose that writer recipients may choose to benefit their work.

The \$500 Diverse Writers grant is "intended to support new and emerging writers from underrepresented and underprivileged groups, such as writers of color, women, queer writers, disabled writers, working-class writers, etc. — those whose marginalized identities may present additional obstacles in the writing / publishing process." The \$500 Diverse Worlds grant is "intended for work that best presents a diverse world, regardless of the writer's background."

Carmen's work has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Granta*, *The Paris Review*, *AGNI*, *NPR*, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, as well as other publications. Her stories have also appeared in the *Best American Science Fiction & Fantasy 2015*, *Year's Best Weird Fiction*, and *Best Women's Erotica*. In 2015, she was awarded the Michener-Copernicus Fellowship, and was nominated for a *Nebula Award* and the *Shirley Jackson Award*. She is a graduate of the *Iowa Writers' Workshop* and the *Clarion Science Fiction & Fantasy Writers' Workshop*, and lives in Philadelphia with her partner.

Carmen is "thrilled to receive the Speculative Literature Foundation's Diverse Writers & Diverse Worlds grants this year." She is an adjunct teacher and a freelancer. Her recent projects—stories, a novel-in-progress, and a book-length essay—have been stalled as she tried to make ends meet. The grant will give her "space to cut back on quite a few freelancing assignments in the upcoming year," enabling her to spend more time with these projects.

The combined grants received a total of 97 applicants. Ten finalists were named for each grant, as well as three honorable mentions. Receiving the Diverse Writers Grant Honorable Mention are Kathrin Köhler, Sara Rivera, and Jane Ann MacLachlan. Honorable Mention Awardees for the Diverse Worlds Grant are Kathrin Köhler, Sussanah Betts, and Shawn Frazier.

When discussing the awards, Carmen wrote, "Searching for stories by and about people like me, *and* stories by and about people who aren't like me, can be a grief-laden, exhausting process. The Diverse Writers/Diverse Worlds grants give writers resources for their work that explores and explodes the status quo. This expansion of the literary landscape is good for everyone."

She added, "I would encourage any writer applying for grants and fellowships to be persistent—doubly so if you find yourself in the exciting but frustrating position of being a finalist or runner-up. Every single writing fellowship/grant/etc. that I've received, I've gotten after being rejected for it at least once (often, more than once) and after coming very close in years prior. There's an element of unpredictability to this process—who is on the committee or jury, for example, or who is in the applicant pool with you—and those things change, and sometimes those changes work in your favor. But also when you apply to things persistently, your work, too, is changing—becoming stronger or sleeker or weirder, coming more into itself. And sometimes those things you can't control work in your favor, and the progress of your writing works in your favor, and there's a perfect storm. So keep applying—you never know what'll happen."

Founded in January, 2004 to promote literary quality in speculative fiction, the all-volunteer Foundation is led by Mary Anne Mohanraj and 30 other committed volunteers. The Foundation maintains a comprehensive website offering information for readers, writers, editors and publishers of speculative fiction, develops book lists and outreach materials for schools and libraries, and raises funds for redistribution to other organizations in the field, as well as four awards made annually to writers, of which the Diverse Writers and World Grants are two. The others include the *Gulliver Travel Research Grant*, *Older Writers Grant*, and the *Working Class Writers Grant*. For more information about the Speculative Literature Foundation, contact Malon Edwards at managing_dir@speclit.org or visit the website at <http://www.speclit.org>.