

Press Release #52

## HILA RATZABI WINS \$800 GULLIVER TRAVEL RESEARCH GRANT

SPECULATIVE LITERATURE FOUNDATION

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The Speculative Literature Foundation is delighted to announce Hila Ratzabi as the winner of the 2014 Gulliver Travel Research Grant.

Ratzabi plans to attend the Arctic Circle Residency in June 2015, which takes scientists, artists and writers on a two-week expedition into the Arctic Circle. She will use the experience to research her poetry manuscript-in-progress, Solastalgia.

"Solastalgia", Ratzabi says, is a term coined in 2003 by environmental philosopher Glenn Albrecht and refers to the pain or sickness caused by the loss or lack of solace and the sense of desolation connected to the present state of one's home and territory. A portmanteau, solastalgia comes from the Latin word solacium, meaning "solace" and the Greek word algo, meaning "pain".

Ratzabi's work-in-progress includes elements of both science and indigenous mythology. Her poetry, she says, will imagine how humans might adapt and respond to climate change. Ratzabi first began writing poetry at a young age. Even then, her focus was on nature and the world around her.

"My very first poem," she says, "written at the age of seven and published in a local newspaper in Queens, New York, was in praise of a daisy. To this day the natural world has been a central subject in my work."

Travel Grant juror Neharika Gupta said of Ratzabi's work submitted for the grant: "Brilliant poetry, exploring climate change in relation to animal behaviour, and myth. Hila Ratzabi's work has a clear, original, and resonating voice. She has gained a lifelong reader in me already, her work's that enchanting!"

Honorable Mentions for the 2014 Travel Grant go to Peng Shepherd, Sherri L. Smith, Cat Rambo, and Adelehin Ijasan for their witty and entertaining submissions, which made the selection of the eventual winner a difficult but enjoyable process.

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The Speculative Literature Foundation is a volunteer-run, non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the interests of readers, writers, editors and publishers in the speculative literature community.

"Speculative literature" is a catch-all term meant to inclusively span the breadth of fantastic literature, encompassing literature ranging from hard and soft science fiction to epic fantasy to ghost stories to folk and fairy tales to slipstream to magical realism to modern mythmaking -- any literature containing a fabulist or speculative element.

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