

Press Release #24

SPECULATIVE LITERATURE FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES 2008 GULLIVER TRAVEL RESEARCH GRANT WINNER

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SPECULATIVE LITERATURE FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES 2008 GULLIVER TRAVEL RESEARCH GRANT WINNER

The Speculative Literature Foundation is delighted to announce that its 2008 Gulliver Travel Research Grant has been awarded to author Alaya Dawn Johnson. The \$800 grant will be used to help Johnson to travel to Mexico City and other historical sites in Mexico, to research a novel.

Johnson's stories have appeared in *Fantasy*, *Interzone* and *Strange Horizons*, and have been reprinted in both the SF and Fantasy Year's Best anthologies edited by David G. Hartwell and Kathryn Cramer. Her first novel was published by Agate Publishing in 2007, with the sequel due in 2009.

"Alaya's fiction is lean and muscular but bejeweled with strangeness," said Colin Harvey, author of *Blind Faith*, editor of *Killers*, and the Foundation's UK travel grant juror. "Within that strangeness, though, beat human hearts. Her characters love and grieve, are bitter, generous or ashamed -as real people are. Her proposal was detailed, her fiction compelling. She is a worthy winner, and we look forward to reading the completed novel."

"Alaya's sample was a compelling slice of a brutal and beautifully realized world. The characters are fierce, tragic and brave, and events in this tantalizingly short piece hint at the complexity to come: one gets the sense that the threads of art, love, and ambition will weave together into a deeply passionate novel about human existence," said Corie Ralston, the Foundation's Managing Director.

Honourable Mentions go to:

Rachel Cantor

David Hill

Weston Ochse

They are all commended for fine efforts, and for making the decision to pick the eventual winner such a difficult one.

The Gulliver Travel Research Grant is awarded to assist a writer of speculative fiction in his or her research. As in previous years, the 2008 grant of \$800 is to be used to cover airfare, lodging, and/or other expenses relating to the research for a project of speculative fiction. The grant is awarded by a committee of Speculative Literature Foundation members on the basis of interest and merit.

The grant is named after Gulliver, a character in the 1726 story "Gulliver's Travels" written by Jonathan Swift. The story represents one of the earliest examples of fantasy travel.

Applications for the sixth annual Gulliver Travel Research Grant will open on July 1, 2009.

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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.

More information about the Speculative Literature Foundation is available from its web site (<http://www.speculativeliterature.org/>) or by writing to info@speculativeliterature.org.

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