

Press Release #26

SPECULATIVE LITERATURE FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES OLDER WRITERS GRANT WINNER

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Karen L. Simpson wins the Speculative Literature Foundation's Older Writers Grant

The Speculative Literature Foundation (SLF) is delighted to announce that its sixth annual Older Writers Grant is to be awarded to Karen L. Simpson. The \$750 grant is intended to assist writers who are fifty years of age or older at the time of grant application, and who are just starting to work at a professional level.

A resident of Ann Arbor, Michigan with a master's degree in Historic Preservation, much of Simpson's speculative fiction contains elements of both her professional and personal her experiences. A historian by profession, Simpson has designed exhibits for museums and other historical institutions that address the issues of cultural diversity and racial reconciliation. She often finds inspiration for her speculative fiction with the discoveries she makes during her research.

But Simpson's inspiration is not limited to her professional life. The writing sample she submitted for the Older Writers Grant, an excerpt of her unpublished novel *Act of Grace*, is based on a violent incident that happened several years ago in her hometown during Klu Klux Klan rally. In the novel, the main character Grace Johnson, a bright, perceptive African American high school senior living in Vigilant, Michigan, takes two bullets to save the life of Klansman Jonathan Gilmore. Both black and white residents of Grace's hometown struggle to understand her actions, but Grace, guided by ancestral spirits who come to her in visions, strives to lead the town towards reconciliation and redemption.

Grant Administrator Malon Edwards said of Simpson's entry, *Act of Grace*: "Grace's intimate narration and folksy-but-modern-Southern-down-home voice immediately pulls the reader into the story. You can't help but like her: she's sassy, she's smart, and when her Nana explains to her that she is to be a conduit for their ancestral spirits, you know immediately that the right girl was chosen for

the task."

Honorable Mentions go to S.H. Gilbert, Phillip Kaldon, David Shifren, K.P. Graham and Ada Milenkovic Brown for their unique and thought-provoking 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.

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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