



Contact: press@speculativeliterature.org

Press Release #66

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

María Isabel Álvarez Wins Speculative Literature Foundation's 2019 Gulliver Travel Grant

January 2020—María Isabel Álvarez is the winner of the 2019 Gulliver Travel Grant, awarded by the Speculative Literature Foundation.

Álvarez is a Guatemalan-American writer who received her BA in English Literature and MFA in Fiction from Arizona State University. Her work has appeared in a number of publications and been nominated for a Pushcart Prize, and she is currently working on a novel.

The grant will support Álvarez's writing, which, she says, tends to "take place between two disparate settings. This duality offers a visceral representation of the world for immigrants, one that is powered by two cultures, two languages, and two countries." Álvarez initially began writing in order to "give shape to the image of my home country."

The Gulliver Travel Grant is intended to assist writers of speculative fiction in research, and can be used to cover airfare, lodging, and other travel expenses. Previous winners of the Gulliver Travel Grant include Hugo Award-winning author N.K. Jemisin, Ibi Zoboi, and Daniel José Older; last year's winner was Asia Nichols.

Álvarez says, "I am grateful to the Speculative Literature Foundation for encouraging writers to explore and experiment on the page as painters would a canvas. Few organizations champion speculative fiction, let alone reward writers for challenging readers' imaginations, and I feel honored to be included among SLF's growing list of talented writers."

One of the jurors for this year's Gulliver Travel Grant said of Álvarez's winning work, "This piece illustrates an inherent understanding of magical realism, and that's not an easy thing to master. The language is gorgeous, the story is fresh, and it offers much on many levels—textually and subtextually."

Honorable mentions for the 2019 Gulliver Travel Grant went to Michaux Dempster, Jenni Zellner, and Claire Holroyde. For more information about the grant, [click here](#).

Founded in January 2004 to promote literary quality in speculative fiction, the all-volunteer Speculative Literature 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 five awards made annually to writers, including the Gulliver Travel Grant. For more information, visit speculativeliterature.org.

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