



GoNOMAD Awards Third \$500 Travel Writing Grant

By Jessica Taryn

Always eager to form relationships with new creative talents, GoNOMAD has been reviewing some exciting one-page submissions explaining what writers would do if they received GoNOMAD's quarterly \$500 travel grant.

Top Nine Finalists

We received so many great submissions this quarter that we had trouble narrowing it down to only five finalists, so we chose nine.

Kathryn Brockman proposed an article that she plans on calling, "The Many Spirits of Iceland," in which she will write about her travels to Reykjavik, Iceland where she plans to

learn about the cultural beliefs in "Otherly Beings." Brockman hopes to visit destinations like 'The Valley of the Trolls' and

'The City of Elves' to uncover the relationship between Icelanders and the spirits.

She says, "In February 2006, I plan to travel to Iceland to explore the relationship between humans, this shadow community of spirit beings, isolation, loneliness and tourism, whose very existence depends on peace and goodwill among all beings."

Inspired by the Nordic folktales her mother read to her as a child, Brockman continued her studies and received a diploma in elf studies from the Icelandic Elf School, which she plans to use to help her identify and differentiate the spirits and their relationship to the culture of the people of Iceland.

"Little is known about Icelanders' deeply rooted cultural beliefs in Otherly Beings that dwell side by side with them, influencing their daily lives and government," she explains. Brockman also plans on learning about Iceland's famous seafood, its thermal waters and thrilling nightlife.

Maida Pineda will visit New Norcia, Australia's only monastic town. Famous for its over-a-century-old wood fired oven, which makes delicious breads, its wine, olive oil and honey, monks live a self-reliant life of silence and simplicity in New Norcia. Pineda hopes to live in the monastery guesthouse or the old convent to learn the ways of the Australian monks. She will participate in early morning prayer sessions, visit the local museum and art gallery and join in on daily town tours.

Pineda says, "Perhaps, I may never commit to the strict vows of monks. But spending several days in New Norcia will surely soothe and spark this thirsting soul."

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