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K-Book Trends

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to those in the global publishing industry.



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TOPIC

The Meaning Behind Korea's "Copybook" Craze

The Analog Comeback in a Digital Age

Written by Song Seok-Ju (*Etoday* Cultural Team Reporter)

The Return of Analog Sensibility with "Text-Hip" Culture

Professor Kim Nan-Do, author of the book *Trend Korea 2025* (Mirae Books), picked the "appeal of materiality" as one of the consumer trends in Korea this year. It is the power to make people not only appreciate content with their eyes, but also want to touch it physically. This is manifested in the "materialization of content" phenomenon. Kim explains that in the age of immateriality, where everything is digitized, people still crave something they can experience with their hands. This explains the recent craze for "transcription books" in the Korean book and publishing market. It is an era where all information is reduced to images and videos. People exposed to all kinds of digital

content are now seeking the pleasure of holding a pen, touching paper, and seeing the contents of a book in handwritten words.

According to YES 24, a large Korean online bookstore, a total of 113 transcription-related titles were published in 2023. In 2024, a total of 181 titles were published, 68 more than the previous year. This is an over 163% increase in sales. This year alone, 126 transcription titles were published from January to April. With less than half of the year having passed, we can see that there have been quite a few transcription books published compared to the past. By age, young readers in their 20s and 40s accounted for 67.7% of all purchases. The reason why young people are buying so many transcription books is related to the so-called “Text-Hip” boom, where writing and reading books are considered “*hiphada*” (the English word “hip” plus the Korean word “to do (*hada*),” meaning something fresh and distinctive).

In Korea and globally, short video content such as TikTok, reels, and YouTube shorts are all the rage. People can’t stand a moment of boredom and want to feel intense fun and stimulation in a short time of around 10 seconds. Younger generations who are tired of such content are creating a text-hip culture. For example, users of text-centered platforms such as Naver Blog and Kakao Brunch express their thoughts through long-form, reflective writing. The satisfaction of writing and reading long pieces in the midst of a flood of instant, short-lived content is leading to the purchase of transcription books. In other words, readers who think of reading as a hip culture, consuming print text in their

own unique way, are buying transcription books.

Transcription books go beyond genres

There are many different types of transcription books that are currently popular in Korea. In the past, they were mainly focused on literary books such as novels, poetry, and essays, but now they have expanded to include music, religion, foreign languages, movies, dramas, and other genres. Genres across the culture are being brought back into the print world. Last year, the top-selling transcription book in Korea was *One Page a Day: A Transcribing Note for Your Vocabulary* (Wisdom House). It has sold more than 200,000 copies to date. The book not only suggests classics from the East and West, but also shows how transcription can effectively improve vocabulary, literacy, and concentration. This is not just a simple transcription book - it is a systematic explanation of the benefits of transcription.

* *K-Book Trends Vol. 81* – Go to the article about *One Page a Day: A Transcribing Note for Your Vocabulary*

www.kbook-eng.or.kr/sub/event.php?ptype=view&idx=1583&code=knowledge&category=67

In second and third place were English transcription books. *Successful Leaders' English Transcription: 100-Day Miracle* (NEXUS) and *English Transcription: 100-Day Miracle* (NEXUS) are both books that help readers find peace of mind and improve their writing skills by transcribing English texts. The book has been highly popular among readers for its practical tutorials.



One Page a Day: A Transcribing Note for Your Vocabulary;
Successful Leaders' English Transcription: 100-Day Miracle; English Transcription: 100-Day Miracle

Meanwhile, as the political situation in Korea has been turbulent with the imposition of martial law by former President Yoon Seok-Yul, books on law, politics, and society have attracted a lot of attention. One example is the book *Constitution Transcribing Note* (The Human), published in October last year. The Constitution represents the most fundamental promise of society. Transcribing the main contents of the Constitution, which enshrines basic human rights, makes us realize that we are subjects of a democratic society. It is a process of cultivating a sense of sovereignty and slowly reflecting on the meaning of the world we live in together. The book has been highly popular as it provides a resounding message that true democracy is realized when each citizen feels close to the Constitution. The book *President Yoon Seok-Yul's Impeachment Decision: Transcription Notes* (Black Coffee) was also published after the impeachment was declared. Immediately after the impeachment was confirmed, many Korean media outlets commented that the

Constitutional Court's decision was a rare masterpiece written based on the minimum common sense of the Constitution. This book was designed to transcribe the full text of the Constitutional Court's impeachment decision.

Aside from these books, books such as *A Transcription Book For Those Who Want to Write Better Sentences* (Big Fish), *Transcription Note for Parents Who Want to Say Encouraging Words to Their Child* (Sangsang Academy), and *Just Write Along, And Your Writing Will Get Better* (Build Good Habits Research Institute) were chosen by many readers last year in Korea.



Constitution Transcribing Note; A Transcription Book For Those Who Want to Write Better Sentences; Just Write Along, And Your Writing Will Get Better

Earlier this year, the *DAY6 Lyrics Transcription Book* (Samho ETM), which contains all the lyrics to 97 songs by the popular Korean band DAY6 in one book, made waves upon its release. Within a week of going on pre-sale, the book reached No. 1 in the arts category and No. 18 on the overall bestseller list. The

buyers of the book were mainly young people. According to YES24's analysis of purchases by age, people in their 20s and 30s accounted for 72% of all purchases. Being able to experience the meaning of the songs in a deeper way by handwriting the lyrics was a big hit with fans.

When it comes to music transcription books, other books such as *When Life Gives You Tangerines Lyrics Transcription Book* (So Music) and *Kim Kwang-Seok's Song Transcription Book* (Nexen Media) have been published. *When Life Gives You Tangerines Lyrics Transcription Book* is a transcription book that allows you to relive the story of the Netflix series, "When Life Gives You Tangerines." The series has become a worldwide hit, ranking as the third most-watched non-English language TV show on Netflix with 3.7 million views to date. The book contains the lyrics to 70 songs, including the show's official OST and episode-specific interludes. Each song comes with a QR code to listen to the original song, so you can listen to the music while transcribing. The book is of high interest to fans because they can write down the lyrics of famous songs by hand and relive the memories of the drama.

Kim Kwang-Seok's Song Transcription Book is a transcription of the songs of legendary Korean singer Kim Kwang-Seok. Kim, who tragically passed away in 1996 at the age of 31, is considered a master singer in Korea. He was loved by all generations as a singer-songwriter, not only because of his vocal talent, but also because of his compositional and lyrical skills. His songs

capture the hardships of life, the wounds of love, and yet also the inspiration to rise up and start again. This transcription book is designed to be enjoyed slowly and to savor not only the songs but also the man himself, Kim Kwang-Seok.

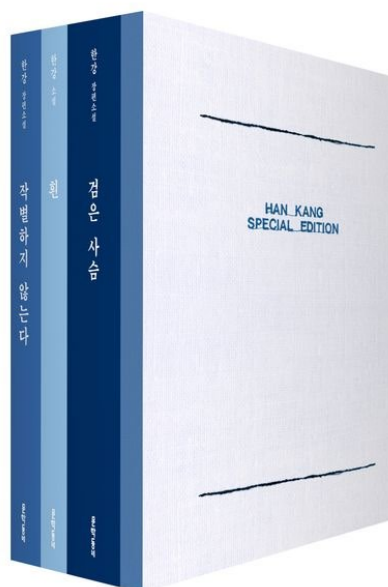


DAY6 Lyrics Transcription Book; When Life Gives You Tangerines Lyrics Transcription Book; Kim Kwang-Seok's Song Transcription Book

The book, *Han Kang Special Edition* (Munhakdongne), a collection of novelist Han Kang's best works, has also been chosen by readers amid the transcription frenzy. This special edition of Han Kang, the first Korean to win the Nobel Prize in Literature, includes three major works: *We Do Not Part* (Munhakdongne), *The White Book* (Munhakdongne), and *Black Deer* (Munhakdongne). The book comes with a transcription note for readers to try their hand at writing the impressive sentences themselves. With Han Kang's award, Korean readers were excited to read the Nobel Prize-winning author's works in the original language for the first time. This transcription book

fulfilled their expectations in that it enabled them to write and savor Han Kang's beautiful poetic sentences.

Religion-related transcription books were also popular. Some examples include *Words of Buddha, the First Translation Loved for 2,500 Years: Transcription* (Forest Books), *Transcription of Hymn Lyrics* (Samho ETM), *Monk Pomnyun's Notebook of Lectures on the Heart Sutra* (Jungto Publishing), and *Transcription Notes: Epistle to the Romans and Hebrews* (Coommi). People stressed at school or work were naturally drawn to these transcriptions as they could be comforted by religious messages.



Han Kang Special Edition

Transcription, a slow consolation in a fast world

Transcription is extremely slow reading. It's the act of using your whole body to read. It is a prime example of "slow culture,"

which is the opposite of “snack culture.” Unlike consuming 10-second bursts of stimulating video content with one hand, transcribing focuses on the sensation of writing each letter. The act of transcribing is imbued with a calm, slow temporality that allows you to reflect on the movement of your hand, the texture of the paper, and the meaning of the book at your own pace.

The recent surge in copybook purchases among Korean readers carries significant meaning. It cannot simply be reduced to a formulaic reaction against the flood of “snack culture.” Korea is currently going through a period of unprecedented political and social conflict and turmoil. The president has been impeached twice, and the country is in a situation of extreme confrontation, confusing difference with wrongness, and defining those with different values as enemies. In such a situation, people may want to find ways to be considerate and respectful of others, even if only through books. It’s as if they want to restore the sense of thought lost in this hectic and dizzying world through transcription. It’s no coincidence that transcription books are expanding beyond literature to include music, religion, foreign languages, and cultural content. The skyrocketing sales of transcription books reflect the will to restore the sense of empathy, communication, coexistence, and mutual growth currently missing among Koreans.

SPECIAL PROJECT

[New Ways of Walking Through Cities ⑤]

Experiencing Nature's Great Epic on the Paradise Island of Hawaii

Written by Kim Young-lhm

Whether it's surfing the waves at Waikiki Beach, hiking Diamond Head to feel the earth's vitality, or snorkeling in Hanauma Bay, a beautiful volcanic crater, Hawaii's great nature is an art in itself. Moreover, you can enjoy sensational artwork in Kaka'ako, a former factory turned art village, or spend peaceful time exploring the National Wildlife Refuge on Kauai, a pristine island home to many natural wonders. In particular, Waimea Canyon, the "Grand Canyon of the Pacific," offers a deeply relaxing experience with the majesty of nature.

Hawaii is a heavenly paradise that is considered a favorite vacation spot of the gods. In addition to the magnificent nature, you can also enjoy shopping at various shopping malls and culinary

delights, such as Kona coffee, which is only grown in Hawaii. With its ethereal landscapes, mystical natural wonders, and inspiring human culture, Hawaii is a true utopia that is beloved by the world. From the moment you set foot on the island, your most cherished memories and happiest travel memories become a reality.



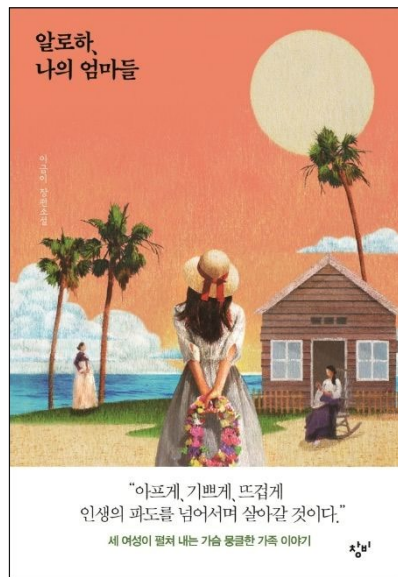
The beautiful community built by first-generation immigrant women in distant Hawaii

Hawaii, often called a surfer's paradise, is famous for the power and majesty of its waves. For the first generation of Korean immigrants* who stepped foot on this dazzlingly beautiful but unfamiliar land, hot rather than warm, those stunning and

dynamic waves may have been the waves of life that they had to surmount every day. Would they have felt like they were in paradise when they arrived with vague hopes and expectations of a better life? For them, Hawaii was an island of glorious sunshine, but it was also a place of struggle for survival.

* The first Korean immigrants to settle in the US state of Hawaii began working on sugar cane plantations on the island of Oahu between 1903 and 1905 as mass labor migrants during the Korean Empire. Not only did they use their earnings to fund the independence movement, but they also participated in the independence movement themselves, leaving a significant footprint for their country.

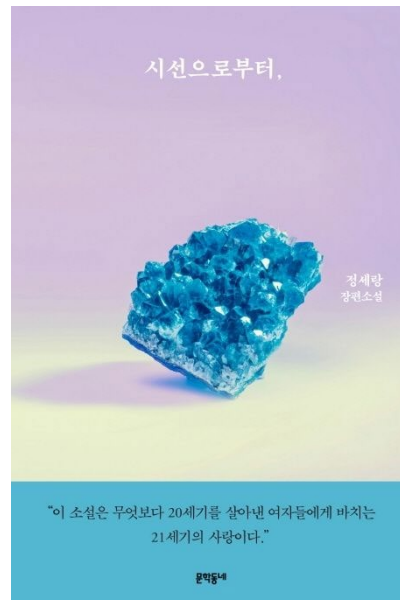
“This was the land of America, Powa (another way of calling Hawaii in the past), or Hawaii. You could shout for Korean independence as loud as you wanted, and there would be no Japanese officers to arrest you. That is probably why Hawaii was called a paradise. Not only that, but it was also a place where women could eat and drink with their husbands at the same table. Buddle’s heart calmed. Now all she has to do was live and study in this paradise with her landlord husband and have fun. The sugar cane fields across the road, which would be Taewan’s, seemed like a sturdy fence to protect her happiness.” - from *Aloha, My Moms*



Aloha, My Moms

Aloha, My Moms (Changbi Publishers) is a heartfelt portrait of the marriage, settlement, and hardships of the first generation of Korean immigrants through the lives of eighteen-year-old Buddle and the women who staked their lives on a single photograph. The promised paradise of Hawaii was not as sweet as sugar cane, and there were no fences to protect their happiness on the island called “paradise on earth.” But, Buddle, Hongju, and Songhwa become friends, mothers, and family, respecting and caring for each other. The three women lead a community of women ahead of their time, realizing the power of solidarity in a strange land. Despite life’s challenges, these three women battled to build a home for their children, and perhaps in their own way, they created a paradise in Hawaii. *Aloha, My Moms* pays tribute to their fiery lives and leaves the reader with a desire to give them a lei, a traditional Native Hawaiian flower necklace.

A story of three generations of mothers and daughters growing up through modern Korean history



From Sisun

Hawaii is a beautiful island that never ceases to inspire and amaze, but amidst its spectacular scenery, there are people living a tough life. As long as life goes on, no matter how heavenly a place is, you can't spend all your time soaking up the scenery. Sometimes, even beautiful landscapes seem distant in the face of a harsh and demanding daily life. Nevertheless, humans are the ones who have the incredible power to not give up, to continue living, and to make love blossom within them. *From Sisun* (Munhakdongne) tells the story of three generations of women: Shim Sisun, who survived the tragedy of the Korean War and went in search of a new life; her daughters, Myunghye and Myungeun, who lived through the last part of the 20th century; and her granddaughters, Hwasoo and Wooyoon, who are living in the 21st century. The story begins on

the tenth year of Shim Sisun's passing, when the four half brothers and sisters, along with their grandchildren, gather in Hawaii for a *jesa* (ancestral rite). Based on the unique Korean culture of *jesa*, the novel depicts women growing up in their own way through the unique idea of "a set up where everyone brings an object, memory, or food to be put on the table."

"At first, I thought about going to the Big Island with my second sister to see the volcano, but I couldn't leave my two kids behind, no matter how well my nephews would watch them. The older one seemed fascinated by the water sports, and the younger one was quick to say he wasn't interested in the coffee plantations. It was sad, because I knew that I would get to think of my mom who drank five or six cups of coffee a day if we walked around the farm. (...) I decided to use a small notebook to record the flavors of the beans. It was a belonging of my mom's, and the first few pages had been scribbled with colored pencils in an unrecognizable form." - from *From Sisun*

In the novel, Shim Sisun is portrayed as an independent woman who defied conformity and forged her own life in the face of the violence and oppression of her time. The Hawaiian life she encountered was unfamiliar, harsh, and as bitter and uncomfortable as foreign coffee. Hawaii was no easy land for a woman from a tiny country in the East; however, the three

generations of mothers and daughters that sprouted from the island grew into strong, vital beings, each writing their own story. Their lives are still as hot and dynamic as the fiery Hawaiian volcano, and they are connected to the strong maternal love of Korean women. Perhaps *From Sisun* is a tribute to the unique way Korean women handle life.

652 days of seeing the world through Hawaii



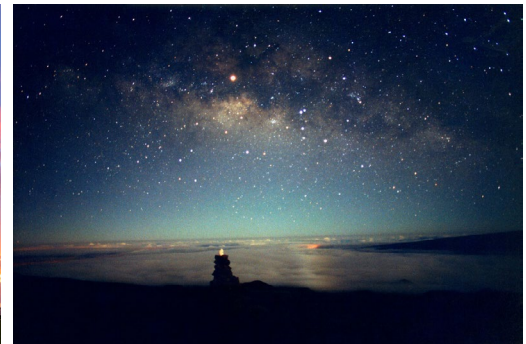
Life in Hawaii

In Korea, there was once a craze for “living away,” where people left their daily routine and lived in a new place for a while. The time spent in an unfamiliar space, away from familiar surroundings, was a journey to take a step back, reflect on oneself, explore the direction of the life one truly wants, and find peace of mind and happiness. This “living away” craze expanded its reach beyond Korea. This is the story of someone who was not satisfied

with just traveling to Hawaii, a paradise on earth, but actually lived there and enjoyed it on a deeper level. It's *Life in Hawaii* (Viche Books), written by a couple who spent 652 days on the Hawaiian island of Oahu.

“To kick off my wetsuit, I went to Haleiwa, a place with great waves. ‘Hale’ is the Hawaiian word for house and ‘iva’ is the name of a bird, so Haleiwa means ‘house of the iva bird.’ This northern beach town has great winter waves, and the nearby Pipeline Beach hosts the World Surf League. Now that I have my wetsuit, I feel like I have a hero’s suit - but don’t go to Pipeline recklessly. Instead, I decided to head to Ali Beach, where the waves are lower.” - from *Life in Hawaii*

Life in Hawaii is the story of a married couple, Seon Hyun-Kyung - the writer and Lee Woo-Il - the illustrator, about their time living in Hawaii. Since this book is written from the perspective of living in Hawaii rather than as a traveler, there are no tourist attractions, restaurants, or shopping tips. Instead, it is a collection of thoughts and reflections on life in Hawaii and everyday experiences, written and illustrated with as much warmth as the Hawaiian sunshine. With more than 200 illustrations that bring Hawaii to life, *Life in Hawaii* will make you feel nostalgic and long for the islands. The unfiltered story of a couple who lived, wrote, and drew in the waves, and how they lived life to the fullest in Hawaii, is a special gift that brings the island closer to readers.



The Hawaii we see through these books is far more complex and colorful than the fragmented picture we have of it. It's a land of glorious beauty, but also of painful and bitter history. So, perhaps this is why we get to look deeper into Hawaii, and, in the process, see and feel the real Hawaii, and truly fall in love with this beautiful, heavenly island. Whatever your reason for choosing Hawaii as a destination, the island never fails to impress and fill travelers' hearts with excitement. From the enchanting landscapes that exude the earth's vitality, to the hot breath of still active volcanoes, to the stunning and mesmerizing spaces that nature has created, Hawaii is on everyone's bucket list to travel to or live in. It's up to you to decide how you want to enjoy and experience this fascinating and beautiful island.

EXPORT CASE

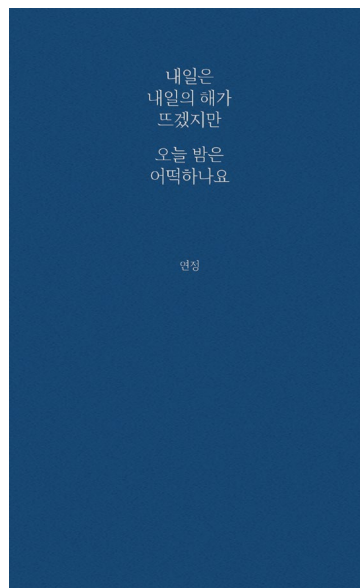
The “Anxiety of Youth” Crosses National Borders

Written by Hee Seok (Publisher of Balcony)

What defines independent publishing? As publishing formats diversify and formerly “self-published authors” begin to compete by starting their own publishing houses, the question of what constitutes independent publishing has become a hot topic. In the absence of objective indicators, independent publisher Balcony defines independent publishing as follows: publishing that can entice readers with its own narrative without large-scale capital investment. In this sense, Yeon Jeong’s *Tomorrow’s Sun Will Rise, But What About Tonight?* can be considered one of the clear success stories of independent publishing.

Before it was published by Balcony in 2020, *Tomorrow’s Sun Will Rise, But What About Tonight?* was an independent publication that Yeon Jeong wrote as a palm-sized book and distributed on a

small scale. The publisher at Balcony discovered the book, which had been distributed in less than five independent bookstores, and signed a publishing contract believing in the story's potential. It turned out to be a good bet. The number of distributing outlets has multiplied beyond the five independent bookstores, and the book has been translated and published not only in Korea but also in Indonesia and now Japan. In the Korean market, it has sold more than 25,000 copies as of 2025. It has proven that essays with a distinct narrative have the power to carve out a market for themselves.



The cover of the book, *Tomorrow's Sun Will Rise, But What About Tonight?*, when it was published in 2020

Idol Artist: The Spark Behind the Success

Tomorrow's Sun Will Rise, But What About Tonight? didn't start out as a hit. It started when Seungkwan, a member of the Korean idol artist group Seventeen, introduced the book on a program.

It was neither a book introduction nor an educational program, but a healing entertainment program. There was also absolutely no way for Balcony to pay for advertising or get in touch with Seungkwan - it was just the result of Seungkwan's sincere love for the book, which led to a brief two-minute introduction. That's all it took to ignite the fire.

However, this cannot be attributed solely to the fact that it was endorsed by an idol. If the narrative in the book had not met readers' expectations, Yeon Jeong and her book would not have been as consistently loved as they are now. In fact, after the Indonesian translation was published first, she was invited to speak at the online book festival "Festival Buku Asia" as an "author that readers love" rather than the "author advertised by an idol."



Thumbnail of Korean media outlet *Aju Business Daily's* YouTube video after the introduction of Seventeen's Seungkwan



A screenshot from the online book talk at Festival Buku Asia in Indonesia (author Yeon Jeong is third from left)

Message, simple sentences, and the author's character

The question is, how did come get to capture the hearts and minds of Indonesian and Japanese readers, let alone Korean readers of similar sentiments? While there is no precise data to analyze, the book's competitive advantage from the publisher's perspective boils down to three main things.

First is the book's message. *Tomorrow's Sun Will Rise, But What About Tonight?* is an essay about the life of a young adult named Yeon Jeong. Young people, not only in Korea but in every country in the world, are facing a much more precarious time than in the past. Housing, employment, relationships, and other factors that make up an individual's life are rarely stable. Yeon Jeong writes a very frank confession about this unstable youth.

The book is filled with stories about the reality of paying rent in a tiny "room" that can hardly be called a home, how she goes to buy strawberries and finds herself buying cheap, damaged

strawberries, and how she struggles to find happiness in the midst of all this. She also talks about what she thinks about the people in her life, such as friends, lovers, and family. These are not something that only Koreans face. Yeon Jeong's narrative transcends nationality and penetrates generations, which is why *Tomorrow's Sun Will Rise, But What About Tonight?* has become a beloved book abroad.

Second, every sentence in *Tomorrow's Sun Will Rise, But What About Tonight?* is written in a clear and concise style. After Yeon Jeong wrote the first draft of the book, she asked as many friends as possible for feedback. She rewrote and revised the sentences until even her friends, who don't usually read, said it made sense. In other words, she ensured that her message was still on point, and that it made sense to any reader. Clear and easy sentences ended up being a powerful weapon in the book. In the age of short-form videos, long, complicated sentences cannot tempt the eyes of many readers. However, Yeon Jeong's sentence structure was simple enough to survive the short-form era. This also helped in the translation process. Because Yeon Jeong's sentences didn't contain complicated Chinese characters or old Korean words, there was no need to spend a lot of time reviewing the translation.



The cover of the currently distributed *Tomorrow's Sun Will Rise, But What About Tonight?* (Yeon Jeong drew the picture for the cover)



Indonesian and Japanese covers of *Tomorrow's Sun Will Rise, But What About Tonight?*

Third, Yeon Jeong's unique persona outside of the book helped boost the book's sales. The author regularly uploads content about her daily life and preparations for her works on Instagram (https://www.instagram.com/i_need_peace_and_quiet/). She responds directly to her readers' book reviews, and whenever she

receives a comment from an overseas reader, she makes sure to thank them by saying, “I might sound a bit awkward because I’m using a translator.” Thanks to her cross-border communication, Yeon Jeong has become a “favorite author” of readers beyond Korea. The way people treat writers of different nationalities has changed. While the best you could do in the past was to learn the author’s language and send a letter or email to the publisher, nowadays, writers and readers can communicate in real-time. Yeon Jeong seized the opportunity to capitalize on this change in media and is still connecting with readers today through *Tomorrow’s Sun Will Rise, But What About Tonight?* She is breaking down the psychological barriers that readers feel from overseas authors.

Cultural differences are small details

When signing a deal with Indonesia, the first export country for *Tomorrow’s Sun Will Rise, But What About Tonight?*, our biggest concern was, “Will Indonesian readers be able to relate to Korean sentiments?” Japan is not as culturally different from Korea as Indonesia. However, even though Indonesia is the same as other Asian countries, there are definitely some differences in lifestyle. In particular, there is a story about going to the bathhouse with mom in *Tomorrow’s Sun Will Rise, But What About Tonight?* As the author scrubs her mother’s back in the bathhouse, she imagines herself coming to the place without her one day and

gets teary-eyed. However, interestingly enough, the bathtub story was the one that readers expressed the most empathy for at the aforementioned book festival, Festival Buku Asia. This is because, despite the cross-cultural difference in “scrubbing off dead skin,” the loss of mom in the future was deeply felt by readers. In the end, “cultural differences” are just a small detail in the face of the power of literature.



A brief look at how *Tomorrow's Sun Will Rise, But What About Tonight?* changed over publications (From far right, Yeon Jeong's past self-published edition, the officially published edition by Balcony, the Indonesian translation, and the Japanese translation)(Source: Yeon Jeong)

In light of this, it might be a good strategy for foreign publishers to target the Korean independent publishing market. Currently, the Korean independent publishing market is full of bolder and more honest stories, unlike the established publishing market. The raw stories that cannot be found in established literature, the precarious confessions of anxious young people, and the worries

of the times that can be understood regardless of nationality are actively marketed in the Korean independent publishing market. I believe that a small blue ocean will open up if we can capitalize on this point faster than anyone else.

Tomorrow's Sun Will Rise, But What About Tonight? aims to connect with the Taiwanese market at the upcoming Seoul International Book Fair (SIBF), as Taiwan will be the guest of honor. I don't think it's unreasonable for the book to reach Taiwan after Indonesia and Japan. As I have said many times, the restlessness of the youth of this era is breaking down borders. *Tomorrow's Sun Will Rise, But What About Tonight?* will prove that if there is only one book that can speak for them, even if it is not written by an author of the same nationality, it can be a consolation.

In closing, I would like to leave you with a brief introduction to *Tomorrow's Sun Will Rise, But What About Tonight?*

“We all have scenes in our lives that we'd rather keep hidden. When we reveal them, some people stay and some leave. This book is a trace filled with the love of those who chose to stay. The point where I thought I was lacking and deficient actually brought me a deep love. The scattered times were opened letter by letter in Yeon Jeong's unique language. If you need a friend to say, “Actually, so do I,” at night when you can't sleep thinking too much, this book is for you.”

ONE-LINER QUOTES

About Fountain Pens, a Record of Nostalgia

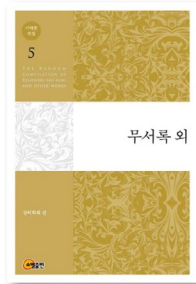
Fountain pen expert's pick

Written by Park Jong-Jin (Head of the Fountain Pen Lab)

Park Jong-Jin is the head of the Fountain Pen Lab. He sees the world through fountain pens. He has been collecting and studying fountain pens for over 40 years. He also plans and hosts the "Seoul Pen Show" every spring and fall. He has written books such as *It's a Fountain Pen* (Lbig Media) and *Of Two Minds About Fountain Pens* (Teumsae Books).

What is a well-made fountain pen? It's one that you write with effortless control by just changing the direction, and one that you fall in love with every time you look at it, no matter how long you have had it, for its beautiful nib and exquisite body. I think writing is something similar. Even though I can't write well, a good piece of writing reads smoothly and gives you a different feeling of interest every time you read it. Plus, if it's written about

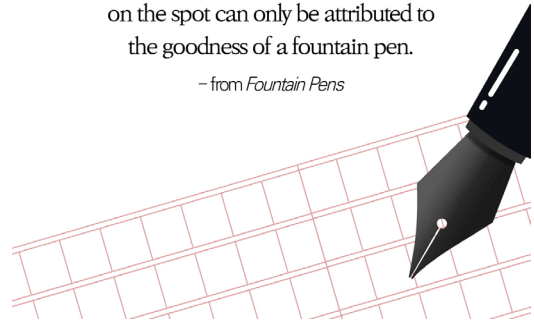
fountain pens, a fountain pen enthusiast like me will always recommend them to anyone who passes by.



Yi Tae-Jun Collection Vol. 5
Yi Tae-Jun, Somyung Books

The experience of writing a postcard to a friend on the spot can only be attributed to the goodness of a fountain pen.

— from *Fountain Pens*



The first book I want to recommend is *Fountain Pens* from the *Yi Tae-Jun Collection Vol. 5* (Somyung Books). It starts with two lines that anyone who has ever fallen in love with anything will recognize as honest confessions. We are born empty-handed, but we all have our favorite little things. You could cross out the “small, insignificant thing” and replace it with a car, or a shoe, or a bag, and these two sentences would still work.

“It would be shameful to reveal a kind of affection for a mere material object—a small, insignificant thing Yet there is no need to hide the truth. I love fountain pens.”

And, Yi Tae-Jun soon explains about the object that we are curious about and that he loves: fountain pens.

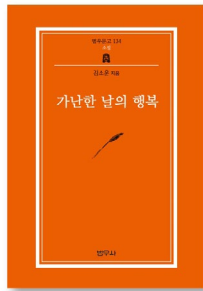
“The experience of writing a postcard to a friend on the spot - in a car, on a boat, in the middle of nowhere, in the mountains - can only be attributed to the goodness of a fountain pen.”

It's quite a nostalgic and delicious expression. The dictionary defines a fountain pen as “a carryable pen made so that the ink contained in the barrel flows out of the nib in a well-defined stream,” but there's no “warmth” here.

“I may be tight on other things, but I was pretty good at splurging on fountain pens.”

This line is echoed in Heumyoung (欽英), a diary written by the 18th-century writer Yu Man-Ju (兪晩柱, 1755-1788). It is also a line that has always comforted and made excuses for me.

“Luxuriating in mansions invites ghosts to peep in; lavishness in eating and drinking harms the body; and extravagance in utensils and clothing destroys the noble dignity. However, the more you splurge on stationery, the more noble you become. The ghosts will look the other way, and your body will be relaxed and clean.”



Happiness From Poor Days

Kim So-Un, Bumwoosa



I look around my entire body and see that
I have nothing to give Chungma,
except for the fountain pen in my pocket.

— from *The Coat*

The second book I want to recommend is *The Coat* from Kim So-Un's *Happiness From Poor Days* (Bumwoosa), which is set in the cold winter of the 1940s. When sending Chungma (青馬; pen name) Yu Chi-Hwan back to Northern Manchuria, where temperatures plummet to minus 40 degrees Celsius, without a coat, he hands over a fountain pen instead.

“I look around my entire body and see that I have nothing to give Chungma, except for the fountain pen in my pocket. I passed down from my teacher a fountain pen called a “Conklin”—a very high-end fountain pen that today’s “Parker” and “Waterman” can’t even match. At the time, this fountain pen, which was priced at 6 won, was one of only ten in Japan.”

The Korean transliteration of the official names for French Conklin, Parker, and Waterman is incorrect, but that doesn't matter. This is because it is just a wonderful thing to have such famous fountain pen companies appear in Korean literature.

In fact, Conklin was not produced in France, but in the United States. It was founded in the late 1890s in Toledo, Ohio, in the US. But did the author not know this? I bet he did.

Unlike Parker and Waterman, which are clearly American, Conklin's name is strongly associated with France, and it would have made more literary sense to call it French, given that the source of Western culture is Europe, with France in the middle of it, and the fountain pen, a writing instrument, is a product of that culture. It is similar to how many people still think of Montblanc, a German company, as a French company.

There's another interesting aspect to this work. Was Conklin's fountain pen so high-end that even Parker and Waterman could not match it at the time? A clue to this can be found in the sentence below.

“The Conklin was taken by a pickpocket not long after I changed the tube. Every time I pass by a fountain pen shop, I shyly peek in to see if I can spot that blue-violet Conklin fountain pen, which is probably the only one of its kind in Korea.”

The blue-violet color caught my attention. Conklin released a blue-violet fountain pen in the mid-1920s, by which time the company was already going downhill. In this respect, the description in the text is a bit off the mark.

Aside from their common theme of a fountain pen, these two stories both end with its loss. Could it be that the fountain pen, which lasts for ten thousand years, is meant to convey the truth that once you meet, you will eventually part ways? I don't know, but I can't help but think of my favorite fountain pens and feel a little sad at the thought of being parted from them one day.

KNOWLEDGE

Books Loved Across Generations: Korean Steady Sellers

From a picture book festival in Jeonju
to a global copyright market in Seoul!

Preview of the Jeonju International Picture Book Fair & 2025 K-Book Market in Seoul

The world's eyes
are on K-books!

Here are two exciting events for
picture book lovers and
global publishers alike.



The 4th Jeonju International Picture Book Fair

Period 2025. 5. 29. ~ 6. 29.

Venue Factory of Contemporary Art in Palbok and Wansan Library in Jeonju

- Content**
- Various exhibitions, conferences, and lectures, including original art exhibitions by Korean and international picture book authors
 - Exhibitions and sales of illustrations and picture books at art markets, book markets, and more
 - Experience programs for all ages

* <https://jipf.jeonju.go.kr/main/menu?gc=500GGHE>



The 4th Jeonju International Picture Book Fair spotlights the value of Korean and international picture book authors and works in line with the global spread of K-books, and showcases various contents to expand the readership of picture books.

**Picture books from
around the world are
coming to Jeonju!**

The Jeonju International Picture Book Fair is more than just an exhibition - it's a time for sharing the stories and emotions of picture books together.

Discover the charm of picture books
beyond national borders!

Find out more on the official website 

**2025 K-Book Market
in Seoul**

Period 2025. 6. 16. ~ 6. 18.

Venue Lotte Hotel World, Seoul

- Content**
- 1:1 business meeting with international buyers for copyright and publishing IP
 - Book exhibition and IR pitching of Korean exhibitors
 - Publishing export strategy seminars and consultations



Hosted by the Publication Industry Promotion Agency of Korea (KPIPA), the K-Book Market is a B2B meet-up event designed to foster global publishing exchanges and promote Korean publishing content to the world.

K-book content goes global!

The K-Book Rights Market is more than just a business meeting
- it's a place for sharing the possibilities of Korean publishing with the world.

Rediscover the value of K-books!

**A time to be
more connected to
the world through books!**

Stay tuned for
**the Jeonju International
Picture Book Fair** and
the 2025 K-Book Market in Seoul,
which will showcase
the present and future of
Korean publishing content!

KOREAN PUBLISHERS

Finger Publishing

Picture books that serve as a springboard for all



The logo of Finger Publishing

As children grow up reading picture books, they learn to explore the world, share emotions, and communicate. The same goes for adults, which is why picture books are shared across generations. Finger Publishing, a picture book publishing house based in Chuncheon, has been publishing series of picture books that convey the power of empathy by knocking on readers' hearts.

Each series covers a variety of topics and plants the seeds of thought, allowing readers to experience a wider world and nurture their minds through books. Especially in May, the month of Children's Day in Korea, there is no better time to discover Finger Publishing's books that expand children's dreams through picture books. Following is an interview with Cho Mi-Ja, CEO of Finger Publishing, where she shares more about the company.

It's a pleasure to have you with us on *K-Book Trends*. Please introduce Finger Publishing to our international readers, along with the meaning of the company's name.

"There's a world and a heart in a picture book." Hello, everyone. I'm Cho Mi-Ja, the head of Finger Publishing. I have also been a picture book author and illustrator for many years. The logo of Finger Publishing is a walking finger. Just like how each person has their own speed and rhythm of walking, I wanted to reflect my hope to create picture books with my own rhythm and pace, sometimes fast, sometimes slow. When I created the logo, I was working on a picture book titled *Sometimes I*, and it was heavily influenced by that picture book. Finger Publishing is a small publishing house in Chuncheon, Gangwon-do, specializing in picture books; it has published 18 picture books so far, including the recently published *The Scary Strawberry Patch*.



Sometimes I; The Scary Strawberry Patch

Finger Publishing is publishing picture books that are not limited to a specific age group, but can be read by anyone, from children to adults. What impact do you think picture books have on children and adults, and what do you think is the value of picture books they share?

I think that picture books are “books read by children first.” In that sense, there are picture books that span a wide range of ages, and there are picture books that focus on a specific age group. Because of the nature of picture books, where they are read by children first, most of them also tend to convey meaning easily.

Perhaps it’s better to say that they use the most basic and comfortable language possible, rather than “easy.” Even topics that are sometimes heavy and difficult, such as love, peace, ego, war, and emotions, are presented in picture books in the simplest way possible. For this reason, I think picture books are a kind and warm genre of creation, and a great playground to begin an aesthetic experience. Since our lives begin as children, the adults

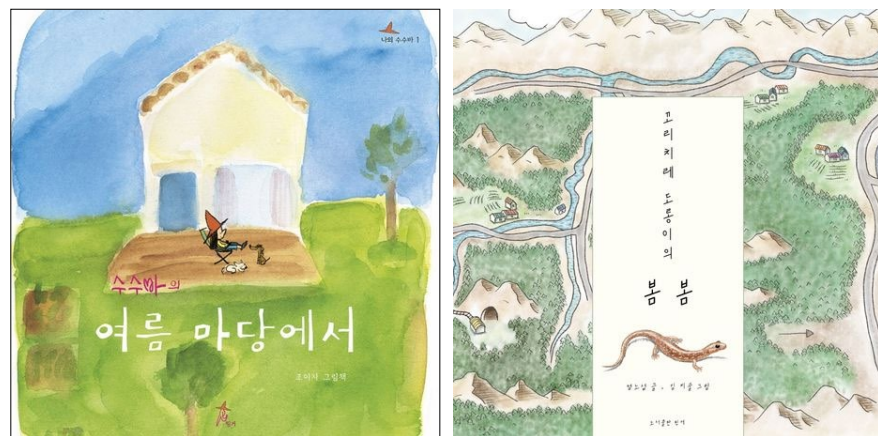
who read picture books with their children also have a childhood of their own. For the same reason, I think there is a point where both children and adults can relate to picture books.

A child appreciates a picture book with the depth of a child, and an adult appreciates a picture book with the depth of an adult. Just as the lives of children and adults are not disconnected, the times a child and an adult laugh together over a picture book are connected. I think about the value of connection.

Please recommend some books published by Finger Publishing that would be great for children and adults to read together and why.

The first one is *In Susuba's Summer Garden*. In *Susuba's Summer Garden* is the first picture book in the *My Susuba* series featuring three friends, Susuba, Pupu, and Coco. Looking at the green grass growing in the yard on a summer day, we wished that just as summer was the best time for the grass, so too would it be for our children and our hearts as adults, where we could grow to our very best. In the book, there is a phrase that goes, "Grow up. Grow big, grow strong, grow wild," which tells us that the vitality of nature is also present in our hearts. The grasses sprouting back in the spring after a cold winter also speak to the power of the mind to overcome difficult times. *In Susuba's Summer Garden* is a picture book that encourages the same energy of life in nature to grow and flourish freely in our hearts. Next, I recommend *Spring of the Long-Tailed Salamander*. This is

the first ecological picture book published by Finger Publishing. It is written by Yeom Noh-Seop, who has studied salamanders for over 30 years, and beautifully illustrated by Kim Ji-Sul. The story is set in Hwanseongul Cave in Samcheok, Gangwon-do, and we can see our lives through the life of a small, cute salamander. The moments of crisis that the tiny creature experiences in the world touchingly convey its strong will to live, and show the beauty of the ecosystem in which so many creatures in nature are interconnected and coexist. Watching their lives makes us think about our own lives and the harmony with nature. The story captures the love and consolation between family members, and the life of a salamander as it unfolds over the course of a year, from spring to the following spring, along with beautiful natural landscapes.



In Susuba's Summer Garden; Spring of the Long-Tailed Salamander

Finger Publishing has been establishing its own identity since its launch in 2019. As a relatively new publisher, what is Finger Publishing's unique philosophy and differentiated strategy?

Finger Publishing embodies my experience and time as a longtime picture book author. My picture books' colors and tastes were very much reflected in the early days as it started as a one-person publishing house; now, I have an editor-in-chief who works with external authors and takes on imported picture books.

When I flip through the pages of a picture book, there are moments that stay with me for a long time - moments when the pictures are beautiful, the witty story makes me laugh, the deep empathy moves me to tears, and I experience a magical moment that takes me somewhere. At Finger Publishing, we want to create picture books that touch readers' hearts while they are reading them.

Starting with our first picture book, *Meet My Friend, Anxiety*, we have published picture books like *Knock Knock Knock for Myself*, *Lost in Sadness*, and *CRACK* that focus on inner emotions. It was a natural progression from *Meet My Friend, Anxiety*, and we wanted to slowly connect the dots. Because of this, Finger Publishing is often mentioned as a publisher of emotional picture books. Our emotional picture books have always tackled the topics in our own colorful and narrative way, sometimes with straightforward language, sometimes with poetic language. For

CRACK, we made it look like a scene from a movie. I think this natural flow of emotional picture books has distinguished us to some extent.



Meet My Friend, Anxiety; Knock Knock Knock for Myself Lost in Sadness; CRACK

While publishing houses in Korea are largely concentrated in the metropolitan area, Finger Publishing is based in Chuncheon. Was there a particular reason for choosing Chuncheon? Also, please tell us about how the regional location has affected the publishing house's operations and picture book production.

Chuncheon is where I was born. It's a small city, a place I grew up in, a place that was familiar and cozy to me, and a place where I made many memories while drawing. I was able to immerse myself in my creative work in a quiet and relaxed atmosphere, and fortunately, its close proximity to Seoul was also an advantage when I decided to move back to Chuncheon. There was also no big problem in continuing to work on and publish my picture books. Creative work requires a time of immersion, and sometimes too much stimulation can be overwhelming;

Chuncheon has been a comfortable environment for me in that regard.

One of the things that is always frustrating when running a small publishing house is advertising. As the number of titles published has increased, we have been participating in book fairs in Seoul and other areas. Although we are a local city with the advantage of being close to Seoul, sometimes it is difficult for us to participate in the many good events held in Seoul due to the distance.

Chuncheon, where I have spent a large part of my life, is a great inspiration for my work. Some people think of Finger Publishing together with Chuncheon because it is located in the city, and some people look at us with curiosity because it is rare for a publishing house to specialize in picture books in the countryside. The above-mentioned *Spring of the Long-Tailed Salamander* was also a collaboration with a local Chuncheon writer. It's been another fun experience to work with writers living nearby.

If You Want to Eat a Red Apple has won the 2025 Bologna Ragazzi Award in the Opera Prima category. We would love to hear your thoughts on the book and what message it conveys to readers.

The news of *If You Want to Eat a Red Apple*'s nomination came as a surprise to everyone, especially since it was unusual for a photographic picture book to win a major award.

Finger Publishing was convinced from the first time we met the red apple picture book. Even when we saw the proposal with one cover and a few pages of text, and when we saw it as a small dummy book, the fact that it was not illustrated but photographed didn't matter at all, because we were already in love with the proposal and the storyline. In the picture book, the children and Korean landscapes captured with a film camera evoke feelings of longing and love. The children grow up with an apple tree planted by their grandfather on the day Jigu, the main character, was born. The time spent by the two children waiting for the red apples to bear is never boring, as they are captured in a cozy landscape of relaxing nature and the day-to-day life that has built up over time. There are two main characters, Jigu, who travels slowly, taking in his surroundings, and his cute little brother Jiho, who enjoys the fast wind. Two children take in the world at different speeds, each growing into their own characters, but both wait with the same heart for the red apple to ripen on the tree.

Adults sometimes worry about children's fast and slow pace, but children grow up beautifully in nature and in the world, interacting with the world in their own way. This picture book captures the sparkling laughter and stories of children. They remind us of a shining childhood and spark memories deep in our hearts. The precious moments of life shine as red as the sun and as bright as jewels, bringing tender emotions and warm laughter.



Winner of the 2025 Bologna Ragazzi Award in the Opera Prima category
– *If You Want to Eat a Red Apple*

With Korean picture books gaining global attention, what role does Finger Publishing hope to play in the publishing market, and what are you doing to ensure continued growth?

I think Finger Publishing can be flexible because it is a small publishing house. We may not be able to publish a lot of books, but we can continue to publish on a consistent theme, or we can publish new and challenging books. Just like how *If You Want to Eat a Red Apple* was new to us, we would like to try different things if we get the chance.

I think the picture book market is expanding rapidly, with more diverse authors and more titles being published. I do worry about the difficult sales market, too. But, when I think about the joy and excitement I felt when I first encountered the picture books I liked, there was a relaxed and candid language that conveyed the difficulties of life in a warm way without making them heavy,

bringing joy and laughter. I think about that feeling whenever I encounter difficulties in my work. Finger Publishing values the empathy that can only be delivered by a picture book. I hope to create picture books that will walk and talk with you, listen to you when you are struggling, and empathize with you.

Finger Publishing releases the *Finger Picture Books* and the *My Susuba* series. What kind of series are they?

Finger Publishing's early picture books were published under the *Finger Picture Books* series. They covered a wide range of topics, such as emotions, memories, and life, and many of them were particularly focused on emotions. Then, starting with *In Susuba's Summer Garden* in 2022, the *My Susuba* series started to be published.

The *Finger Picture Book* series is a series that is published on a variety of topics. A total of 13 volumes have been published, and they cover inner feelings, the world and life, contemplations on freedom, and recollections of memories in the heart. In addition to the aforementioned books, there are *Our Last Summer*, which depicts memories of summer days, and *Into the Book*, which is a cartoon-style book about a journey into a book in search of courage. And then, there are *King Baltasar*, the story of a polar bear embarking on a life of deliberate choices; *When You're Older*, an adorable depiction of two brothers; and *Congratulations!*, made with drawings from people at a facility

for people with disabilities who participated in art volunteer programs.

There are currently five volumes in the *My Susuba* series. The series features Susuba, who is wearing a big hat and has two adorable puppies, Pupu and Coco. It depicts the heart and joy found through observing and experiencing nature. In addition to *In Susuba's Summer Garden* and *The Scary Strawberry Patch*, *Susuba's Starlight Jump Rope* explores the power of imagination when looking at the night sky, and *Blow, Autumn Wind of Susuba* portrays the colors of autumn. And, *Susuba's Snowman Friend* shares memories of a nostalgic friendship with a snowman.



The Finger Picture Books series – *Our Last Summer; Into the Book; Congratulations!*



The My Susuba series – *Susuba's Starlight Jump Rope; Blow, Autumn Wind of Susuba; Susuba's Snowman Friend*

Finger Publishing has been creating picture books that cover a wide range of topics and are a joy to read. Are there any particular books that you would recommend to international readers?

I would like to recommend *Meet My Friend, Anxiety*, and *If You Want to Eat a Red Apple*, which I mentioned earlier.

Meet My Friend, Anxiety is a story about anxiety, a difficult emotion that exists in the heart. Along with love, happiness, and joy, anxiety is also an emotion inside of me. It's an emotion that I sometimes hate, an emotion that I'm scared of, and an emotion that I want to hide. The story is about how anxiety is a part of me that I need to embrace. The emotion of "anxiety" is represented by a duck, which is depicted in brightly saturated colors, bringing the reader closer to the invisible emotion. It's a heartwarming story about the process of feeling, meeting, and embracing anxiety.

If You Want to Eat a Red Apple is a book about two children growing up, and will be a cherished memory for readers around the world. The natural Korean landscapes convey a sense of comfort, and the old house, mother-of-pearl cabinet, and worn yard walls will surely be beautiful to international readers. It's not just about the exotic or unfamiliar sights, but the universal feelings of longing and nostalgia created over time. The children's cheerful laughter and stories are a reflection of childhood that everyone can relate to.

We are thrilled to see Finger Publishing's future as a picture book publisher. Please tell us about the direction you hope to take, as well as your goals and plans for upcoming titles.

It's amazing to think that Finger Publishing has been publishing picture books since 2019. When we first started the publishing house, we decided not to look too far ahead and just start publishing. We thought we would just make the picture books that we loved and wanted to make. Now, in our sixth year, it's been exhausting at times, but we have been so encouraged by the great award we received this year. We hope to continue publishing emotional picture books with more sensitivity in the future - especially the ones that capture not only heavy emotions, but also bright, warm emotions. We are currently working on the second story of *If You Want to Eat a Red Apple* as well as promoting the newly released *The Scary Strawberry Patch*. Thank you so much for your love and support for our picture books, and we look forward to continuing to create picture books that bring warmth.

KOREAN AUTHORS

Writer Jung Myeong-Seop

Breaking the mold, pushing boundaries, and expanding the horizons of genres

Just as there are no royal roads in life, there are no shortcuts to building your writing career. You just have to keep working hard and strive to meet your readers with better works. Writer Jung Myeong-Seop is no different, having been prolific and passionate in a variety of genres. His realistic stories pique the curiosity of readers and make them immerse themselves in his works with great concentration. He says that “genre disruption” is the driving force behind his blissful prolificity. Jung, who has firmly established himself as a writer by gaining readers’ love despite not having majored in literature, says, “Literature is a dream of challenging the system and the world and going beyond it.” It is this challenging spirit that drives him to break the boundaries of genres and expand new horizons.



It's an honor to have you with us on *K-Book Trends*. Please say hello to our readers along with a brief introduction of yourself.

Hello, subscribers of *K-Book Trends*. It's good to see you through this interview. I'm writer Jeong Myeong-Seop. I have been meeting readers through various works for the past 20 years. And, now, I'm preparing to meet readers of *K-Book Trends*.

You have been writing for nearly 20 years, since debuting in 2006 with the novel *Red Tag* (Random House Korea). Having established yourself as a writer over such a long period, we would like to hear about your life as a writer, from your perspective.

If I had to grade my life as a writer, I would give myself a score of 51 out of 100. My dream since childhood has been to win the

Nobel Prize in Literature, and I still have a long way to go to fulfill that dream. The remaining 49 points represent that dream. I believe that every life must have a dream, and that taking one step at a time towards that dream is the right direction to take in life, so those 49 points are very important and meaningful for me as a writer and as a human being. Although I have written hundreds of books over the past 20 years and have created a variety of works, it is all just the “snow that fell yesterday.” What matters is who I am today, and who I will be in the future.

You write across a wide range of subjects and genres, from zombies, apocalypse, history, mystery, to young adult, and nonfiction. You are particularly known for your thorough research. How do you choose the topics for your works, and what kind of research do you do for the background settings? And, how do you think this process influences your work?

Since I am basically a history enthusiast, I often look at the *Veritable Records of the Joseon Dynasty*, and read newspaper articles, seminar materials, and papers from the 1920s to 1990s provided by portals. In the past, I had to contact university labs directly to obtain papers, but nowadays, I can freely access them through the Online National Assembly Library, making it possible for me to constantly browse and decide on a topic. Many readers assume that I decide on a topic before I start researching, but in reality, the topic often comes to me while I’m searching

for materials. Since excessive greed can narrow one's vision, I approach my research with an open mind, thinking that I'm not limited to a specific time period or event, but rather to a wide range of materials. So, as a matter of habit, I browse papers, and search for materials on the Internet, and recently, I also refer to related content on platforms such as YouTube.

When something captivates me, I "dig" into it, which is to say, I delve into it deeply and obsessively. Since I didn't formally study literature or history, I feel like I have to put in more time and effort. I believe that thorough research is key to making a work more realistic and immersive for readers.

Your latest work, *Dark Walk* (TXTY), has gotten a lot of attention since its release. Can you give us a brief introduction to this work? Also, please share any messages you would like to convey to readers through the book.

During the Joseon Dynasty, there was a secret inspector position called *ahmhaengeosa* (secret royal inspector). These were temporary officials, appointed by the king himself, who were sent to the provinces to secretly inspect local officials and examine the lives of the people. As I was looking through related materials, my eyes were drawn to the word "*ahmhaeng*." The word is a combination of the words "*ahm* (暗; dark)" and "*haeng* (行; to act)" and means "to infiltrate secretly," but I literally interpreted it to mean "to walk in the dark." Around that time, I

had a dream while sleeping, in which a man kept walking in the dark, and I tried to follow him, but the distance never seemed to close, and I eventually woke up. That dream sparked the idea that I should write a story called “dark walk.”

I believe that in life, tragedy and comedy always go together, like twins. When I look back on my own life, whenever something good happened, something bad followed, and vice versa - when something hard happened, something good followed. So, I wanted to tell a story in which the main character goes through the highs and lows of life in a historical setting, and tries to figure out why so much tragedy happened to him and those around him.



Dark Walk

In this book, *Dark Walk*, we specially incorporated a special feature called “*Bookeum*” (book音; music to listen to when

reading the book, <https://youtu.be/h9okH9HdcI8>) to heighten the fun and immersion of reading. TXTY, the publisher of this book, mainly publishes webtoons, and they hold a lot of events and new things. There was a suggestion to put background music, a kind of OST, in *Dark Walk*, so I tried it, and I was very satisfied with the result. There are many people who listen to music while reading books, and I think it was a very fresh and interesting attempt to create such a sensory effect together.

You have written several works closely related to history, such as *Following the Traces of the Japanese Occupation* (The Nan Publishing), *Trauma Scene Cleaner* (Hani Book), *Miss Sontag* (Booksea Publishing), and *Myeolhwagun: Fire's Love* (Neo Fiction). You also participate in activities such as “Night at Gyeongheegung Palace” and “Seoul History and Culture Tour.” How do these on-site activities influence your work, and why do you choose to use actual people or historical events in your works?

I love attending events and telling stories to people. That's why I often go on historical and cultural tours, excursions, and lectures whenever I get the chance, and these activities have become a part of my life. These experiences naturally flow into my work. For example, when I go to *Segeomjeong* (a historic pavilion located in the north of Seoul where the Joseon Dynasty kings used to wash their swords), I can recall the events and times that actually took place there, even if the terrain has changed a

bit. I often walk from *Jahamun Gate* (a gate located in the north of the capital city of Hanyang during the Joseon Dynasty) to *Segeomjeong*, counting my steps, imagining how it feels when the sun shines on it, and trying to imagine the psychology of the main character. These details help me to make the characters more realistic.

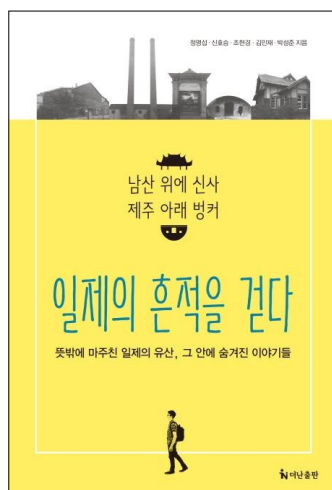
I often use real people, real events, and real places, especially in genres like historical fiction and science fiction, where the authenticity of the setting is crucial. Putting a real person at the center of the story, or involving them in a pivotal moment, makes the story much richer and more compelling, as in my favorite series, *The Chronicles of Brother Cadfael*. I think this approach can be appealing to international readers as well as Korean readers.

You have been a prolific writer - this year alone, you have published the novels *Dark Walk* and *Mister Shadow* (Aphros Media), as well as the anthologies *Matisse×Thriller* (Matisse Blue Books) and *Cliche: The Expanders* (Vook Da). What has been the driving force behind your steady writing, and do you have any personal strategies or tips you could share with us?

My answer is simpler than you might think. I had to make a living as the head of the household, and of all the jobs I have had (like barista or office worker), writing has been the least stressful and the most sustainable thing for me to do. Above all, it has

been my voracious curiosity that has kept me going. I didn't major in creative writing or Korean literature, and I didn't make my debut through the *shinchunmunye* (spring literary contest), but when I reflect on why I have been able to write consistently for over 20 years, I think it all boils down to the fact that I want to create stories that interest me and want to share them with people. And, I think it's not only my ability that has kept me on this path for over 20 years, but also the help and luck of those around me.

Some people stop or put things down when they achieve a certain level of success, but I have always found myself thinking about “the next thing” as I get over a hurdle or achieve something. I still have so many stories I want to write, and they keep expanding into other stories, which makes it impossible to stop. I think this combination of factors is what keeps me hooked on writing.



Following the Traces of the Japanese Occupation; Miss Sontag; Myeolhwagun: Fire's Love, based on historical subjects



Anthologies *Matisse x Thriller*; *Cliche: The Expanders*

You have been recognized for your work in various fields, including the Jikji Fiction Award, Golden Pen Award, and Asian Film Market NEW Creator Award at the Busan International Film Festival. You have also been selected for Storyum’s Best Story Production Matching Support Project. How do you think you have been able to achieve such a wide range of success, and what are your thoughts on literature?

I think the biggest thing that has allowed me to be so prolific is the freedom of not being tied down. If I had followed the typical path of studying Korean language and literature or creative writing, and making my debut through *shinchunmunye*, I might not have been able to write in a variety of genres that resonate with a wide range of ages. When I first started writing, people expressed some surprise, but I didn’t have any expectations. In fact, that indifference actually encouraged me to keep writing. The reason why I can freely cross genres is because I don’t have

a “limit” that says that if I can’t fit a story into a certain mold, I have to give up on it. I think that’s why more stories can come out.



Even when I’m asked about literature, I could approach it with more flexibility and freedom because I don’t represent literature and didn’t originate from the literary world. However, if I’m asked what literature is, I would say that it is a light that shines in the lowest places of the world. The written text is inherently subversive and destructive, and it follows only one principle: it does not conform to the established rules. Even one of my favorite works, *A Dwarf Launches a Little Ball* by Cho Se-Hee, is a story about people who choose to challenge and outrun the system rather than conform to it. Literary works that were

considered disturbing or strange at the time ended up changing the world. I hope to continue to strive to write the kind of literature that shines a light on the lowest, darkest places in the world.

You have a fan base not only in Korea but also overseas. Are there any works that you would particularly like to introduce to the international market?

Several of my 220+ works have been translated and published overseas, and I hope that all of my works will be translated and loved by overseas readers in the future. To introduce a few of my works, I would like to mention *Dark Walk*, a full-length novel that I introduced earlier. This is a “dark fantasy” genre that hasn’t been fully explored in Korea yet, and I think it will be interesting to overseas readers because it shows the unique history and culture of the Joseon Dynasty through the “*ahmhaengoesa*,” a unique system that doesn’t exist in other countries.

Another is *Trauma Scene Cleaner*. It’s a story that imagines a job that didn’t exist in the Joseon Dynasty, a job that organizes the remains of the dead. It tells the story of the lives of women in the pre-modern era, how they tried to escape reality, and what we should do to avoid going back to that time. It also reflects my hope that while there are inevitably hierarchies in our lives, we should be equal in death.

Lastly, I would like to introduce *Mister Shadow*, which was

published at the beginning of the year. It is a story about a man who risks his life to hire a killer to avenge his daughter's innocent death. The theme of private punishment and revenge is one that resonates not only in Korea, but also in many economically advanced countries. As the saying goes, "the higher the building, the deeper the shadow," the more advanced a society becomes, the greater the gap between rich and poor, the more fixed the hierarchy, and the more frustrated and angry people turn to crime. In a world where there is a growing interest in private punishment due to repeated cases of unfair punishment, I wanted to write a story that could relieve some of that anger and frustration. The killer in this story is a new character who is different from the conventional image, and I think it can bring a different appeal.



Trauma Scene Cleaner, Mister Shadow

We would love to hear about your plans and goals for the future. Please tell us about any new titles you are currently working on or have in the works, as well as any messages you would like to share with international readers.

I'm certainly going to continue to work hard to fill the 49 points. The next 10 years will probably be the best time I can keep writing as vigorously as I am now, and the next 10 years after that will be a period of reflection. That leaves me with about 20 years, and if I live my life to the fullest, I believe that the god of creation will give me another chance to reach for the stars, just as he gave me the chance to become a writer when I was a high-school graduate barista.

I'm working on a lot of things right now, but if I had to pick one, I would say that I would like to write a unique story about a guy with a lot of money and nothing better to do, who cracks down on criminals just because he is "bored." It's a detective story, and the first draft is done – I'm working on revisions now. It should be published sometime this summer, so please check it out.

I would also like to say something to our international readers. One of my works, *Seoul Zone Interdite* (Neo Fiction), was published in 2012 and was first translated and published in France in 2018. It is one of the many works of Korean literature being introduced abroad, and I was very happy to be able to meet international readers. The French translation still has a prime spot on my bookshelf. Every time I go abroad, I feel a noticeable

increase in interest in Korean literature, and several of my books have been exported to various countries, with more translations to come. There are a lot of foreign tourists visiting Korea these days, and I think one of the ways to understand Korea more deeply and have more fun is to read Korean literature. If you read a book or two about Korea in preparation for your trip, I'm sure Korea will be a more welcoming place for you.



Korean and French covers of *Seoul Zone Interdite*

* youtu.be/W1kcbxhTnEY

IMAGE OF K-BOOK

The Tiger: The Origin of Korea's Symbolic Story

Q. What animal best represents Korea?



In the “What animal best represents Korea?” poll, the tiger received an overwhelming 83.1% of the vote. Tigers have long been deeply rooted in Korean history and culture, with Koreans referring to them as *Sangun* (山君; the king of the mountain), symbolizing the majesty and authority of nature. The Legend of Dangun is a classic example of the symbolism of the tiger. The legend explains the origins of the founding of Korea, where Dangun, the son of Hwanung, the god of the sky, founded Gojoseon. When Hwanung descends to rule the human world, a bear and a tiger begin training to become human by eating mugwort and garlic in a cave. However, the tiger leaves halfway

through, and the bear, who perseveres, becomes a woman and becomes Dangun's mother. In this story, the tiger symbolizes the limits of humanity, and remains an important figure in later mythology and culture.



Tigers (called '호랑이(*horangi*)' in Korean) symbolize Koreans' strong spirit

Tigers can be found in the tomb paintings of Goguryeo, and in folk tales from the Joseon Dynasty, they are often depicted as guardians against evil spirits. As such, tigers have come to symbolize bravery and fortitude, and have become an iconic representation of the strong Korean spirit. In modern times, tigers are still alive and well, appearing as mascots for sports teams, logos and characters for companies, and more. As such, tigers are more than just animals; they are cultural symbols that represent Korean national identity and pride. So, understanding and protecting tigers is a way to keep Korean culture alive.

There are many different types of Korean books about tigers,

ranging from fiction, poetry, non-fiction, humanities, and picture books. The book we would like to introduce today is the children's book series *Horangi's Bakery* (Jihaksa Arbol). The series, which has four volumes published so far, tells Korean historical stories with Chef Ho, a tiger chef, as the main character. In particular, the first volume, *Strange Horangi's Bakery 1: The Counterfeit Case of Shindan Mugwort*, is based on the Legend of Dangun, and follows the adventures of Chef Ho as he opens a bakery in Shindan Village. While history is often stereotyped as difficult and complicated, the *Horangi's Bakery* series connects historical elements with delicious desserts, such as Seokgatap bread and Dangun Wanggeom cake, to bring Korean history and culture to readers in an approachable way.



Horangi's Bakery Vol. 1-4

The *Horangi's Bakery* series is more than just a fairy tale, it is cultural content that naturally incorporates tradition, history, and mythology. With the tiger, Korea's most iconic animal, at its center, it serves as an imaginative link between the past and the present. In particular, the series has moved away from the

scary image of the tiger and reimagined it as a warm and playful character, bringing the symbolism and meaning of the tiger to a new generation. It's a pleasure to introduce tigers, which help explain the roots of the Korean people, to the readers of *K-Book Trends*.

For Koreans, tigers aren't just a symbol of their country, but a cultural code that embodies their national identity. It has been, and continues to be, a central pillar in mythology, art, education, creativity, and more, connecting generations. Some of you may already be familiar with tigers as they consistently appear in Korean dramas, movies, books, and other content. What other creative stories and forms of tigers will we see in the future? We look forward to seeing the many different faces of tigers that will spark more imaginations and stories.

* [Go to the voting event for the next month issue](https://forms.gle/ecdLdmhRckBCmNq49)
<https://forms.gle/ecdLdmhRckBCmNq49>

LET'S TRY

Delicious Recipes for the Whole Family!

Event

[Let's Try](#) introduces various useful, practical books published in Korea every month.

Also, don't miss gift events related to the introduced books!

Simply click on the link below and make an entry to the event! [Let's Try!](#)

Suyeon's Family Favorite Meals: Recipes Her Three Boys Always Finish

- Written by Yu Su-Yeon, published by BOOK21



with the secrets to getting picky eaters and adults alike to enjoy their meals and clear their plates. The 103 recipes are designed to build healthy eating habits in kids, with simple ingredients that anyone can follow even with the demands of real-life parenting, and short cooking times that make them easy to fit into your busy day.

With 680,000 followers on Instagram, author Yu Su-Yeon's recipes have already been lauded by countless moms on Social Media. Her recipes also feature hacks for preparing both adult and child meals at once, perfect for the whole family. The best part of this book is that it contains only recipes that are both delicious and nutritious! If you have trouble deciding what to put on the table every day and want to treat your family to a healthy, hearty meal, *Suyeon's Family Favorite Meals: Recipes Her Three Boys Always Finish* will be your best companion.

[Go To Article](https://www.kbook-eng.or.kr/sub/event.php?ptype=view&idx=1598&code=knowledge&category=67)

<https://www.kbook-eng.or.kr/sub/event.php?ptype=view&idx=1598&code=knowledge&category=67>

I READ

The Vegetarian by Han Kang

Written by Willie Frances (Reader of *K-Book Trends*)

This article is a review written by a Japanese reader of
K-Book Trends after reading a Korean book.

If you want to share your wonderful experience of reading Korean books
with other overseas readers, please send us an email!

kbooktrends@gmail.com

Han Kang's *The Vegetarian* is a haunting, deeply psychological novel that explores personal autonomy, societal expectations, and the consequences of nonconformity. The story follows Yeong-hye, an ordinary woman who suddenly decides to stop eating meat after a series of disturbing dreams. What begins as a simple dietary choice soon spirals into a harrowing transformation,

unsettling her family and leading to increasingly surreal and tragic events.

The novel is divided into three parts, each narrated by different people in Yeong-hye's life—her husband, brother-in-law, and sister. Through their perspectives, we witness how Yeong-hye's quiet rebellion disrupts the rigid structures of family and society. Han Kang's prose is spare yet poetic, creating an eerie and unsettling atmosphere that lingers long after the book is finished.



Japanese and Korean covers of *The Vegetarian*

One of the most powerful aspects of *The Vegetarian* is its exploration of the body as a battleground. Yeong-hye's refusal to conform is seen as an act of madness rather than self-liberation, highlighting the ways in which patriarchal and cultural forces suppress individuality. The novel also raises profound questions about desire, control, and identity—questions that have no easy answers.

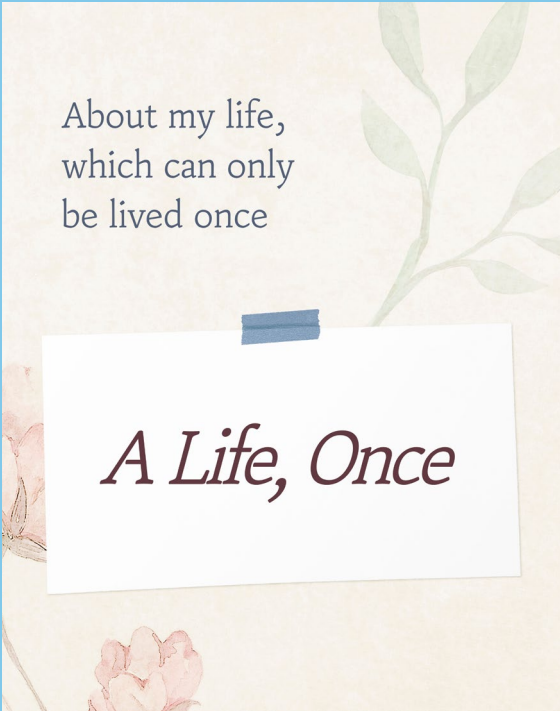
The Vegetarian is not a comfortable read, but it is a necessary

one. It is a story about resistance, about the cost of choosing one's own path, and about how society reacts when someone refuses to play by its rules. Whether read as an allegory, a feminist critique, or a psychological drama, Han Kang's novel is unforgettable, making it a must-read for anyone interested in thought-provoking literature.

NEW BOOKS

A Life, Once

About my life, which can only be lived once



About my life,
which can only
be lived once

A Life, Once



*Memoir of a Murderer, Black Flower,
I Have the Right to Destroy Myself —*


After more than 30 years of
literary work, South Korea's leading
author Kim Young-ha returns with
his first essay collection in six years.

This book, a compilation of articles originally serialized in “Youngha’s Weather,” a paid email subscription service,

shows a surprisingly private side of the author’s life.


It’s more than just a how-to manual or a guide to life – it’s the story of the author’s truthful experiences, struggles, family, and self.

“Why is life so unfamiliar and yet so precious?”




Moments with the author's
father and mother, anecdotes from
school, favorite books and movies...


The fragments of everyday life are
carefully captured to bring
you closer to the author.



“The only thing we know
about life is that
we only get to live it once.”



Kim Young-Ha captures
this humble view of life
in a gentle and unpretentious voice.




"My father's unwritten will was only half fulfilled.

His ashes were buried in Daejeon National
Cemetery as per his wishes, and the country
erected a headstone with his name on it.

I don't offer rituals. Instead, I remember
my father in my own way. I write.

I write about what he has left me."

- from the book



This book doesn't offer
cheap comfort or advice.

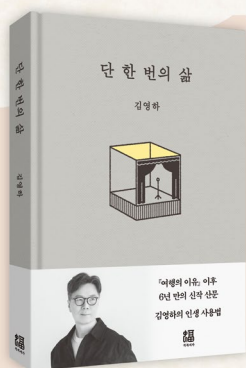
It asks quietly how you,
as an ordinary person
who lives "only once,"
will live your version of life.

A life that began
without a will of my own...

The book will make you
contemplate a real life,
one that is unpredictable,
unfair, and without order.



A time to rediscover the moments of your life!



A Life, Once

Kim Young-Ha, Bokbokseoga Publishing

BEST SELLERS

A Season When Spring Blossoms Stir the Heart

Best Seller Trends in the Three Biggest Online Bookstores in Korea for the 2nd week of April, 2025

It's April in Korea, a season full of excitement as spring flowers bloom in cities and nature alike. As people flock to enjoy the short but intense season, more and more readers are turning to books to get in on the fun. Books as colorful as spring flowers have made their way onto the integrated best seller lists for the second week of April. For example, Kim Young-Ha's new essay *A Life, Once*, which has been making waves since its release, quickly became the No.1 overall best seller. Kim described the book as "a book that can only be written once in a lifetime," capturing the thoughts and feelings that Kim has accumulated from deep within himself. Although life is said to be unpredictable, unfair, and disorganized, Kim's book offers a lighthearted yet sharp look at the only life we have. Instead of comfort or advice, the book offers readers a "time to contemplate."

* *K-Book Trends* Vol. 82 – Go to the article about *A Life, Once*

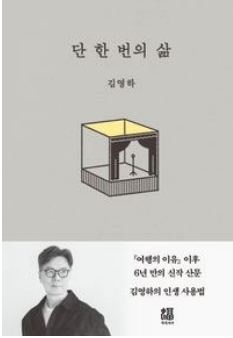


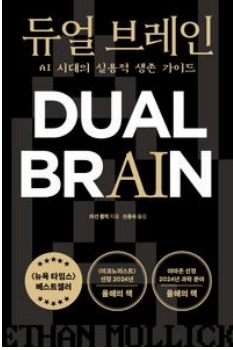
www.kbook-eng.or.kr/sub/info.php?ptype=view&idx=1596&code=info&category=69

Meanwhile, two books about the political philosophy of one of the presidential candidates, Lee Jae-Myung, made it into the top 10. At No. 2 was *It's Ultimately People That Make It Happen*, and No. 5 was *Lee Jae-Myung's Road*, showing that political issues also influence the best seller list. At No. 3 was *I Give, And I Forget*, a book that has only recently been rediscovered since its publication in 2023. Chronicling the life of Kim Jang-Ha, who has emerged as an icon of positive influence, the book questions what it means to be a true “adult” through the story of his more than 50 years of practicing generosity and offering without expectation of return.

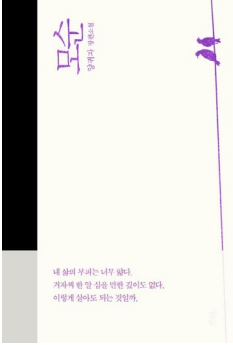
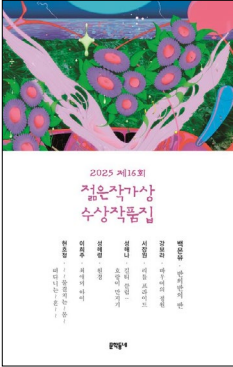
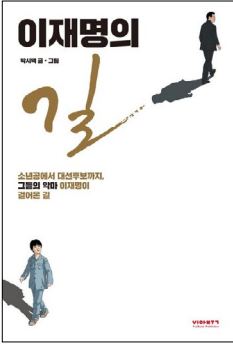
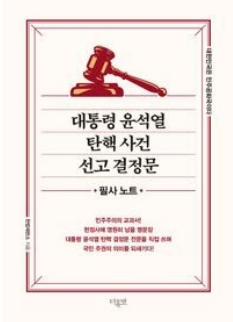
With Children's Day coming up on May 5 in Korea, there has been a lot of interest in children's books. In the second week of April, the top five best sellers in the children's category were led by the longtime favorite *Common Siblings 19*, which took the top spot. Another “Common Siblings” series, *Common Siblings' Common Curiosity 13*, also showed off its popularity, coming in at No. 2. Tied for second place was *Long, Long Nights*, the grand prize winner of the 21st Munhakdongne Children's Literature Award. Through the story of the world's last white one-horned rhino and a young penguin born in the rhino's arms, *Long, Long Nights* is a heartwarming tale of the interconnectedness of our world.

* The rank of best sellers below was organized after integrating domestic best sellers in the second week of April from the three biggest online bookstores in Korea – Kyobo Bookstore, Aladdin, and Yes 24.

Top 10 best sellers for the 2nd week of April

<p>1</p>		<p><i>A Life, Once</i></p> <p>Author Kim Young-Ha Publisher Bokbokseoga Publishing Genre Non-fiction</p>
<p>2</p>		<p><i>It's Ultimately People That Makes It Happen</i></p> <p>Author Lee Jae-Myung Publisher Ohmybook Genre Politics / Society</p>
<p>3</p>		<p><i>I Give, And I Forget</i></p> <p>Author Kim Ju-Wan Publisher People Power Books Genre Non-fiction</p>
<p>4</p>		<p><i>Co-Intelligence: Living and Working with AI</i></p> <p>Author Ethan Mollick Publisher Sangsang Square Genre Self-help</p>

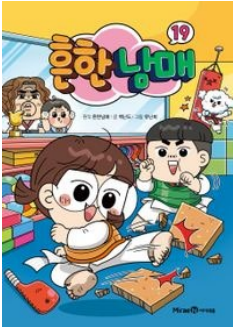
Top 10 best sellers for the 2nd week of April

<p>5</p>		<p><u>Contradictions</u></p> <p>Author Yang Gwi-Ja Publisher Write Publishing Co. Genre Fiction</p>
<p>5</p>		<p><u>Winners of the 16th Munhakdongne Young Author Award (2025)</u></p> <p>Author Baek On-Yoo and others Publisher Munhakdongne Publishing Genre Fiction</p>
<p>5</p>		<p><u>Lee Jae-Myung's Road</u></p> <p>Author Park Si-Baek Publisher ViaBook Publisher Genre Politics / Society</p>
<p>8</p>		<p><u>President Yoon Seok-Yul's Impeachment Decision: Transcription Notes</u></p> <p>Author Constitutional Court of Korea Publisher The Human Genre Politics / Society</p>

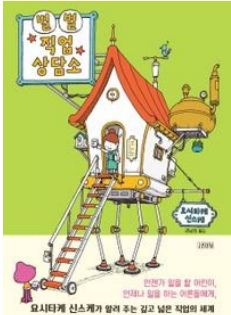
Top 10 best sellers for the 2nd week of April

<p>9</p>		<p><i>Adult Happiness is Quiet</i></p> <p>Author Taesoo Publisher Page 2 Books Genre Non-fiction</p>
<p>10</p>		<p><i>One-hundred Days of Transcription for Adults</i></p> <p>Author Kim Jong-Won Publisher Chunggrim Publishing Co., Ltd. Genre Self-help</p>

Top 5 children's books for the 2nd week of April

<p>1</p>		<p><i>Common Siblings 19</i></p> <p>Author Baek Nan-Do Publisher Mirae N (I-Seum)</p>
<p>2</p>		<p><i>Long, Long Nights</i></p> <p>Author Luri Publisher Munhakdongne Publishing</p>

Top 5 children's books for the 2nd week of April

2		<p><u>Common Siblings' Common Curiosity 13</u></p> <p>Author Ahn Chi-Hyeon Publisher Mirae N (I-Seum)</p>
2		<p><u>Oshigoto Sodan Center</u></p> <p>Author Shinsuke Yoshitake Publisher Gimmyoung Junior</p>
5		<p><u>Suppearlman, the Cashierless Convenience Store Hero 1: Strange Convenience Store</u></p> <p>Author Ahn Do-Gam Publisher Sandbox Network</p>

#K-BOOK

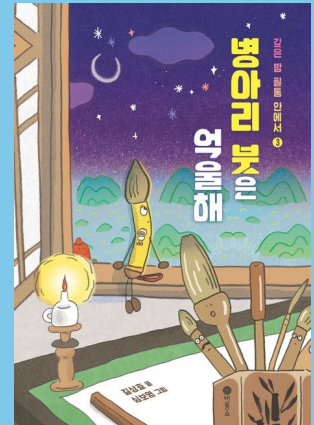
#Children

KPIPA Introduces K-Books for Global Publishing Markets through K-Book Platform

Somebody Believe the Baby Brush

1. Publication Details

Title | Somebody Believe the Baby Brush
 Author | Bo-young Sim; Sang-hyo Gil
 Publisher | BIR Publishing Co., Ltd.
 Publication Date | 2023-05-30
 ISBN | 9788949162522
 No. of pages | 100
 Dimensions | 148*215



2. Book Intro

The pencil case is filled with whispering and talking among the writing tools who are obsessed with their owner Dami. This book brings you three stories of these pencils that will make you laugh!

The 1st story_ Somebody believes the baby brush

In the wee hours of the night, with its hair soaked in dark ink the little yellow brush must write 1,000 difficult characters. But there's something else he actually wishes he could be writing!

The 2nd story_ Wrting & Erasing

Today's social studies lesson was about drawing a map of our neighborhood. But why did the eraser completely erase the entire map that the green pencil carefully drew?

The 3rd story_ Notes are the best

One day a pencil that used to belong to Dami's friend, comes to join the gang in Dami's pencil case. The pencil has no problem fitting in, chatting away, and

sleeping well. But is the pencil really doing okay?

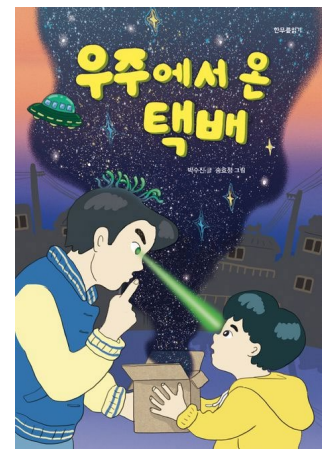
The world of the lovely pencils is filled with everyday chatter and new happenings, but the only thing that the pencils truly care about is their owner Dami. The story of the pencils will not only make young readers burst out in laughter but will also give them comfort. Because every kid is the one and only owner of the pencils in their pencil case, who cheers and care for them.

[See more details >>](#)

A Delivery from Outer Space

1. Publication Details

Title | A Delivery from Outer Space
Author | Song Hyojeong; Park Soojin
Publisher | CrayonHouse Co., Ltd.
Publication Date | 2022-12-30
ISBN | 9788955479768
No. of pages | 152
Dimensions | 150*217



2. Book Intro

A meteorite crashes down on Gogeu Mountain, and people flock to Dongsan village in the hope of finding expensive rocks. Around that time, a thief begins to steal fried chicken from Kim's Fried Chicken. Sungu is a boy who's been living with his mom since his dad passed away. He follows Haneul, a cat, to the abandoned house with a green gate that will be demolished soon, where he finds a man in a baseball jacket munching on fried chicken, bones and all. But there's something odd about this man. Very handsome with bright green eyes, he says hello in English, Japanese, then Chinese. His voice sounds like a little girl at first, and then an old woman! Who is this mysterious man?

Sungu's efforts to ignore Dad's absence

Sungu's dad was a second-rate baseball player who was always sitting on the bench during games. Sungu didn't really like his dad, who couldn't spend time with him because of his job, couldn't earn much money, and always argued with his mom. One day, his dad died in a traffic accident. Sungu stowed away the tangle of resentment, grief, and longing deep within his heart and carried on with his daily life. When an alien fills his dad's absence, however, he realizes how much he missed him. Sungu discovers the secret behind the packages delivered by the alien and believes there must be one for him. Is there a delivery from outer space for Sungu?

A boundless love from the universe

Everyone in Dongsan village has their own loneliness and longings deal with—the man selling coffee has a bad leg, the granny selling garlic lives alone because her family passed away, and Sungu’s mom opened a side dish business after her husband died. All of them try to protect Sungu from feeling lonely, without being too obvious. Thanks to the alien, Sungu realizes how much love and care he’s received and tries to share that love with Seungjae, the older boy who’s always mean. The Delivery from Outer Space is a story about Sungu, who discovers love from the universe through an alien visitor. It’s also about a piece of love from the universe that crash-lands on the village. It will give readers a peek of the love for humanity the alien leaves behind on Earth. You may wonder who the alien is, but it’s really up to you. The absence of a loved one can make you feel empty and lonely, but someone or something else will keep you company. It could be a friend, a fond memory of your loved one, or a life goal you’re striving to achieve. We hope your lives are overflowing with love, like Sungu’s—with love from all over the Earth and beyond! In fact, you’re probably getting boundless love from the universe already.

[See more details >>](#)

A Nine-Year-Old’s Two-Wheeled Bike

1. Publication Details

Title | A Nine-Year-Old’s Two-Wheeled Bike
Author | Sim Boyoung; Shin Woonsun
Publisher | KINDERLAND/BANDAL
Publication Date | 2022-10-07
ISBN | 9791197402791
No. of pages | 80
Dimensions | 188*245



2. Book Intro

Jiyu suddenly insisted on removing the training wheels on her bike. She made up her mind after Huey from upstairs passed her on a two-wheeled bike, asking, “Are you still riding a toy?” Her father said he would help her on the weekend, but she brushed his words aside and went to the playground by herself. It wasn’t like she didn’t want Huey to stand by and help by coaching her, but it got on her nerves. She was in a hurry to learn to ride a two-wheeled bike well, like her friend Huey and the older girl living in the apartment building next to theirs. As days of envy and hard work gradually passed, one day, her two-wheeled bike split the air and rolled forward, leaving a smile on Jiyu’s face. Jiyu’s admiration for her teacher is shared by her classmates, leading to a

competition to see who likes their teacher the most. But the conversation about how much they liked their teacher somehow took an unexpected turn and ended up becoming a chat about smelly farts and poop galore. The conversation lasted until lunchtime, causing Jiyu to lose her appetite and eventually leave food on her plate. The teacher probably likes children who aren't picky with their food and who eat everything on their plate, so Jiyu was worried. Then she happens to get a glimpse of her teacher's plate and finds a ray of hope.

Jiyu and her friends were playing Cops and Robbers in the playground. There were five of them, so one had to be the kkakdugi, a player who gets to play on both sides. Naturally, all eyes turned to Jiyu, who was small and slow. Jiyu was forced to volunteer as the kkakdugi, but naturally, she didn't feel good. Then the other kids tried to get the kkakdugi to play on their team, making her feel much better. Jiyu and her friends made up new rules whenever a problem occurred while playing games. At first sight, their conversation seemed to flow in a ridiculous direction as they said whatever came to mind, but it was amazing how the kids always found their way to their rightful places. The children, listening to each other's ideas and solving problems, seemed better than the adults. Nine-year-old children enjoying and creating something together can be quite beautiful.

[See more details >>](#)

Blue Pierrot and Friends

1. Publication Details

Title | Blue Pierrot and Friends
Author | Kim Singeon; Ko Il
Publisher | ISEOWON Publishing Co.
Publication Date | 2015-11-01
ISBN | 9788997714568
No. of pages | 40
Dimensions | 196*265



2. Book Intro

Blue Pierrot has a big scar from a burn on his face. Because of the scar, he puts on pierrot pantomime makeup and spends his life making people amused with his pierrot costume.

One day, due to a sudden downpour, Blue Pierrot's makeup washes off. Counter to his worries, the spectators and children in the venue all support and cheer him on. Thanks to this, he no longer feels ashamed about his appearance comes to love his face as it is, and makes new friends.

This book encourages readers to think about what it means to get along with

friends and also delivers the message that what's most important is not a person's appearance but their personality and character.

[See more details >>](#)

See What They Mean, Say What You Mean

1. Publication Details

Title | See What They Mean, Say What You Mean
Author | Cha Sangmi; Oh Eun-yeong
Publisher | Gimm-Young Publishers, Inc.
Publication Date | 2020-10-25
ISBN | 9788934986652
No. of pages | 400
Dimensions | 153*200



2. Book Intro

This book teaches parents how to communicate with their children in a way that anyone can easily follow. Presented are ways in which parents can discipline effectively and avoid coming off as nagging.

This book covers real situations to which all parents can relate, such as children who incessantly whine, inappropriately touch others' belongings, or who have the excessive need to reaffirm the love of their parents. This book offers ways to clearly educate children without resorting to anger. The first half of the book introduces ways to speak to children that are easy to understand and follow, while the second half includes more specific and philosophical approaches.

[See more details >>](#)

Dream of a Square

1. Publication Details

Title | Dream of a Square
Author | Ahn Somin; Yoo Young-suk
Publisher | Changbi Publishers, Inc.
Publication Date | 2020-01-02
ISBN | 9788936447571
No. of pages | 46
Dimensions | 220*220



2. Book Intro

When I was little, I found square things all around me peculiar. I imagined an alien “Square” living on a right-angled star was sending some kind of telepathy to make himself known on Earth. Things are changing everyday and the world is becoming diverse but perhaps we are still under the influence of Square’s telepathic power. _Yoo Young-suk

At a four-sided desk, I draw all kinds of pictures on a rectangular piece of paper. As I listened to the song that pervaded my school days, I could look back on those years. I hope this book can elicit fond memories for the readers as well. _Ahn So-min

Since the song “Dream of a Square”(from the album, White 3) was released in 1996, it has been much loved by South Koreans. It was included in the textbooks and children’s music albums as well. The song will become the third in the series of the Changbi Illustrated Book of Lyrics in which Korean popular music with beautiful lyrics will be recreated with illustrations. The lyrics of Yoo Young-suk’s song and the drawings of the illustrator Ahn So-min will come together to show the pure and free mind of children while making a critical commentary of a uniform society. The pictures of Ahn So-min, who was chosen as one of the fifty Golden Pinwheel Young Illustrators, will captivate the readers with the contrast of forms and symbolic use of color.

The text of this picture book is the song lyrics of the same title which has been loved more than 20 years in Korea since it was first released. A boy starts his day on his square bed. He opens the square door, has breakfast on the square table, goes to school with square backpack, studies on square books looking on square black board in the square classroom. But the grown-ups are always saying to him “You should be a person of well rounded mind” The pink balloons of the last page will be a small but sensational stir to this “square-shape” standardized society. Changbi Publishing will publish the “Changbi Illustrated Book of Lyrics Series” which will combine beautifully written lyrics of Korean songs illustrated with drawings. Diverse members of the family with different generations can read and enjoy the book.

The rights to the lyrics of this song is managed by the Copyright Management Bureau Documentation.

[See more details >>](#)

A Story of Cookie Monster

1. Publication Details

Title | A Story of Cookie Monster
Author | Yi Yeong-rim; Yu Sun-hi
Publisher | booknbean
Publication Date | 2014-10-10
ISBN | 9788994077772
No. of pages | 120
Dimensions | 190*250



2. Book Intro

Geum-dong's dad is very worried that Geum-dong and Eun-dong will get sick from eating too many snacks. He makes a cookie monster out of paper and sticks it on the door of the "Confectionery House." Geum-dong, unable to eat sweets whenever he wants because of the cookie monster, is attracted to the words of the cookie monster, who tells him that there are so many sweets in the magical underground land, where they eat sweets instead of rice every day. Without hesitation, Geum-dong jumps on a mole with the cookie monster and rides on it to the underground land. What will happen to Geum-Dong in the underground land after following the cookie monster?

The baby monster lived with its father in the underground land. Then one day, the sudden death of his grandmother made the father monster fall ill. The doctor said that he needs star candy to heal his father. While wandering around looking for star candy, the baby monster finds some in the house of Geum-dong. However, in order to cure his dad's illness, he has to trick Geum-dong into coming to the underground land. How can the cookie monster take Geum-dong to the underground land?

[See more details >>](#)

My Heart Is a Roller Coaster

1. Publication Details

Title | My Heart Is a Roller Coaster
Author | Choi Seonhye; Park Boogeum
Publisher | Pulbit Media Publishing Co
Publication Date | 2014-08-15
ISBN | 9788967340285
No. of pages | 148
Dimensions | 165*225



2. Book Intro

First, this book has readers remember that they are the owners of their own hearts. It has readers write or tell what has annoyed them and what they have hated. The readers can express whatever they want. The important thing is to distinguish what they can change from what they cannot.

This book has readers practice four stages of “heartfelt conversational skills.”

Step 1, Expressing only what I observed among things that I want to say

Step 2, Expressing what I felt about what I observed

Step 3, Finding the reason why I felt that way

Step 4, Asking what I want specifically.

For example, readers can express themselves like this.

(① Expression of observation) I saw you frowned before. → (② Feeling from observation) I was offended at your frown because it looked like it was directed toward me. → (③ Reason for the feeling) I had wanted to say hi to you → (④ What I want) Let’s smile next time our eyes meet.

In this way, *My Heart Is a Roller Coaster* guides readers through the stormy period of adolescence safely and peacefully by habituating them to read minds and express themselves clearly. Moreover, if parents and children read this book together, parents can have a conversation with their children about how to treat them, and it can be a good opportunity for parents to talk about puberty honestly.

[See more details >>](#)

A Happy Secret

1. Publication Details

Title | A Happy Secret

Author | Sung Young-ran; Seongbae Park

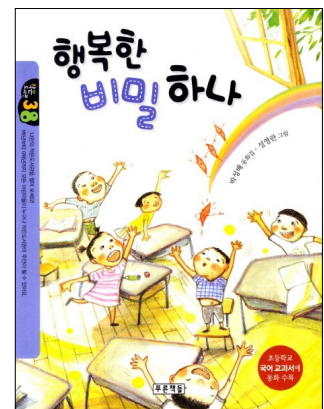
Publisher | Prooni Books, Inc.

Publication Date | 2012-01-10

ISBN | 9788957983065

No. of pages | 120

Dimensions | 172*225



2. Book Intro

Childhood experiences, friends that you meet, and stories that you read are very important because they greatly influence your personality, character, emotions, way of thinking, and behaviors throughout your life. Therefore, children need to have friends and stories that help them grow into people who consider others and have gratitude. However, today’s children have harsh daily lives. They repeat a routine

of going to school and educational institutes, are stressed out about their school grades and performances, and are exposed to harmful information that pushes away stories that provide a positive basis for growth.

A Happy Secret is a collection of stories that are heart-warming and show the innocence of childhood instead of trying to catch children's attention with provocative subjects. The collection is like soft, cozy, pastel hues rather than splendid, eye-catching primary colors. The stories are complemented by illustrations by Youngran Seong, who is famous for her poetic, witty style and who has illustrated various textbooks.

When tomboy Seongmi notices that her photo on the rear wall in the classroom has disappeared, she suspects that the classmate boys have taken it. However, the culprit is not caught, and fighter-like Yeongman even makes fun of her. When docile Mincheol enters the classroom, Yeongman thinks he's the culprit and goes through Mincheol's bag. The title story "A Happy Secret" is about a happy secret between Seongmi and Mincheol. The book contains nine other children's stories that show the secret to happiness is a mind of gratitude. "A Little Snowman Who Lived until Autumn" is about a little snowman who sacrifices himself to take care of Chanho. "Trace of Kkumjaengi the Dragonfly" is about a dragonfly named Kkumjaengi, who tries to leave traces of himself in the world, and "Skating in a Moonlit Night" is a touching story about Minhoo, who has disabled legs but wants to be a good skater, and Dongsu's father, who supports him.

[See more details >>](#)

The Stories Shouldn't Be True

1. Publication Details

Title | The Stories Shouldn't Be True

Author | Kang Gyeongsu

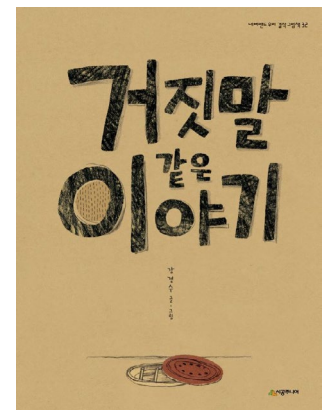
Publisher | SIGONGJUNIOR

Publication Date | 2011-02-20

ISBN | 9788952760661

No. of pages | 36

Dimensions | 210*275



2. Book Intro

This picture Book "The Stories Shouldn't Be True" is about the children in several countries who cannot even ask for their human rights. The book presents their burdensome life in a calm manner and makes the reader think about the fundamental rights of the children.

In various parts of the world, numerous people are suffering because of natural

disasters, the terror that result from bombings caused by conflicts between various races, religions and the diseases that come from widespread poverty. Koreans are not particularly conscious of these issues however; it remains a fact of life that there are a multitude of people throughout the world who suffer because these problems and this is especially true for the children in such places. The writer, who was personally astonished by these facts, planned this book to convey a simple truth and that is that even if we are living in different parts of the world and have distinct appearances, we are still all one family in this global village. To accomplish this goal, he wrote and illustrated this book by himself. The unbelievable truths revealed in this book are astonishing and impressive as told in the literary storyline and literature installments which clearly show the writer's character. As we turn page after page and the children from different countries send their greetings to their Korean friends, the children's pitiful life is narrated in a very clear voice. By repeating these comparisons and gradations, the sensations and after effects strongly impact the reader. Additionally, a Korean child character appears and is shocked by the reality of the others the world that surrounds her and her innocence will touch the readers as something that be can be found in all of us. In the simple stories and pictures, we are expected to fill in the blanks with our thoughts.

The illustrations are roughly drawn in a collage format on recycled paper as it is the intention of the writer to emphasize the blankness and by the use of simplicity and roughness emphasize the overall tenor of the book.

This book not only demonstrates the incredible but also what is the true reality and through those efforts tells of the importance of the world as a community. The book is highly regarded and won the Ragazzi prize in the Bologna Children's Bookfair.

[See more details >>](#)

INFO

KPIPA Attends the 2025 AFCC as the Country of Focus!

Korean picture books meet the world



What is the Asia Festival of Children's Content (AFCC)?

It is Asia's largest children's content festival, an international event that brings together stakeholders in children's and young adult literature, picture books, and content.

2025 AFCC

Period // May 22 (Thu) - May 25 (Sun), 2025

Theme // Discovery

Venue // National Library Building, Singapore

Organizer // Singapore Book Council (SBC)

**At the 2025 AFCC,
the Publication Industry
Promotion Agency of Korea
(KPIPA) will be organizing
the Country of Focus pavilion!**

We will showcase Korean picture books to the world, with exhibitions of the 2024 Korea Picture Book Award and major overseas award-winning picture books, special exhibitions of invited authors, and online book readings by authors.



We will also be hosting special meetings with Korean authors!

We will share the charm of Korean children's literature with Singaporean readers through lectures, workshops, book talks, seminars, and conferences by 10 invited Korean authors.



Here are some other special programs featured in the 2025 AFCC Country of Focus pavilion!

COF Korea Night

- Introduction of books for the 2025 reciprocal translation
- Celebratory performance commemorating the 50th anniversary of diplomatic ties between Korea and Singapore

Korea-Singapore Reciprocal Translation Program

- Donation of 5 titles selected for reciprocal translation to Singaporean libraries, schools, organizations, and more

BIG COF Showcase

- Exhibition of original pictures by Korean picture book writers and illustrators

KPIPA will continue to provide various support to help K-picture books shine in the global children's publishing market.

We look forward to your continued interest in the 2025 AFCC and Korea's Country of Focus pavilion!

