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# K-Book Trends

offers Korea's highly informative publishing content  
to those in the global publishing industry.

## TREND

<b>Topic</b>	Expanding the World of Books Through Book-Themed Merchandise
<b>Special Project</b>	[New Ways of Walking Through Cities ⑫] The Global Hub of Culture and the Arts: London
<b>Export Case</b>	The Secret Weapon: How Data Connects Global Publishing
<b>One-Liner Quotes</b>	Books That Help Us Grow into Ourselves
<b>Knowledge</b>	The Third Chapter of the Korea Picture Book Award: The New Landscape of Korean Picture Books

## INTERVIEW

<b>Korean Publishers</b>	Storybowl
<b>Korean Authors</b>	Poet Na Tae-Joo

## EVENT

<b>Image of K-Book</b>	A Confession Told Through <i>Tteok</i>
<b>Let's Try</b>	A Tiny World of Nature Inside a Glass Jar: Terrariums
<b>I Read</b>	<i>We Do Not Part</i> by Han Kang

## INFORMATION

<b>New Books</b>	<i>Children of the Fourth Person</i>
<b>Best Sellers</b>	Moving Into the Final Stretch of 2025
<b>#K-Book</b>	#Secret

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## TOPIC

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# Expanding the World of Books Through Book-Themed Merchandise

Written by Kim Yang-Hee (Assistant Manager at PLATFORM P)

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## The craze for book-themed merchandise

At bookstores and book fairs across the country, what catches the eye as much as the books themselves these days is book-themed merchandise. From bookmarks, postcards, and stickers to keyrings, T-shirts, book covers, incense, and drip-bag coffee, objects orbiting around books have now become a form of publishing content in their own right. According to Kyobo Book Centre's statistics, sales of reading accessories in 2024 rose by 28% compared to the previous year. The trend was evident at this year's Seoul International Book Fair (SIBF), where nearly every publisher's booth displayed merchandise beside their books, and readers purchased these items with enthusiasm equal to the books themselves.

Some criticize this shift, arguing that merchandise is overshadowing books and accelerating the commercialization of publishing. However, the phenomenon deserves a broader perspective. **Merchandise does not replace books; rather, it becomes a medium that carries the reader's desire to linger longer in the act of reading - another doorway into the world of the books.** For those who make books, such items are not mere cute or aesthetic novelties, but new channels for storytelling that strengthen the bond between books and readers.

### **Merchandise-driven new reading culture and consumption patterns**

The popularity of book-themed merchandise is not a fleeting trend. It is reshaping the publishing market by creating a new mode of consumption. Today's readers do more than simply read: they copy favorite lines, and they want to keep something close that preserves the feeling of a memorable scene. This desire manifests as merchandise - becoming a new motivation for purchasing books and a device for remembering them longer. Large bookstores are expanding their own merchandise lines, while publishers and independent bookstores are designing and selling items linked to their titles, broadening the market. Online bookstore Aladin exemplifies this shift: it continues to release its own merchandise - book-shaped pillows, paperweights, book



merchandise offers more than the pleasure of owning limited editions. It creates a sense of belonging among members who share a special, exclusive experience, strengthening trust and affection toward the brand. Over time, this emotional connection builds a structure that leads to long-term brand loyalty and repeat purchases.



Welcome package of the 2025 “Minum Bookclub” and the “Correct Korean Keyrings”  
(Source: Minumsa Publishing)

Across book fairs nationwide, merchandise is far more than promotional material. Small items - postcards, stickers, and notebooks - become revenue sources for small publishers and an essential first point of contact with new readers. These modest objects visually express a publisher’s sensibility and act as windows through which readers encounter their work. Ultimately, merchandise is evolving into a mechanism that not only attracts readers and enriches the reading experience, but also forms a new pattern of consumption within the publishing ecosystem.



Book-themed merchandise produced by one-person publishers for PLATFORM P's special exhibition, *Objects Beside Books*, in 2025 (Source: PLATFORM P)

## Examples of book-themed merchandise that expanded reading experience

Book-themed merchandise has become a new language for publishers as well. While the central task in the past was “making a good book,” now the critical question has become “how to shape the reader’s experience of the book.” Merchandise is an experimental answer to that question. The online culture in which readers post “merchandise purchase proof shots” that effectively serve as book reviews fosters reader communities, around which natural fandoms emerge. Merchandise also enables a diversification of publishing business models. Beyond generating

additional revenue through direct production and sales, publishers now engage in brand collaborations, pop-up stores, subscription-linked products, and other experiments within the merchandise ecosystem. This shift signals the expansion of books into a broader cultural-content platform. If merchandise has changed the relationship between publisher and reader, that change is now extending into the reading experience itself.

When a single line from a book becomes a postcard, when a character's emotion becomes a scent, or when the mood of a scene becomes a T-shirt or a cup of coffee, the reader feels the book again - through their fingertips. Reading experience based on merchandise goes beyond owning a book: it keeps the book's world close in everyday life, extends the sensory experience of reading, and becomes a way for readers to express their literary



Limited-edition merchandise from Changbi Publishers' pop-up store, "SICNIC"  
(Source: Changbi Publishers)

taste. For example, Changbi Publishers opened the pop-up store “SICNIC” last year to celebrate the 500th issue of *Changbi Sisun*. The store showcased a wide range of limited-edition merchandise - glass cups engraved with lines of poetry, keyrings, pens, memo pads, and more. These items, which drew on the lines and cover designs of poetry collections, created a light, friendly entry point for younger readers to encounter poetry.

Workroom Press collaborated with the café Namusairo to pair 6 titles from its literary series *PROPOSITIONS* with 6 types of coffee, creating drip-bag packs printed with lines from each book. The idea was to encourage readers to recall the world of the book through the aroma of coffee, extending the act of reading into a sensory experience woven into daily life. This experiment illustrates how merchandise can propose a lifestyle to be enjoyed alongside books.



Workroom Press’ “*PROPOSITIONS*” package and packs of coffee  
(Source: Workroom Press)

Book-themed merchandise has now moved beyond the domain of publishers and bookstores. Small brands related to books and book-reading lifestyles have begun to emerge; the merchandise created through collaborations between these brands and publishers invites readers and brand fans alike into different reading worlds. The fashion brand Traktat, which makes “book-like clothes for readers,” collaborated with Munhakdongne Publishing for the 2024 SIBF, and made graphic T-shirts themed on authors from the *World Literature Series*. It was a kind of a “TOUR T-shirt,” evoking the merchandise of famous musicians. Designed for readers who want to express their tastes and interests even without carrying the book, the shirts received an outpouring of love immediately after their release.



Traktat and Munhakdongne Publishing's collaboration:  
“TOUR” t-shirts created by representative writers of the *World Literature Series*  
(Source: Traktat)

As such, merchandise expands the personal experience of reading into a social one. On Social Media, readers share photos of books alongside their merchandise, creating a culture of expressing their tastes - one that is giving rise to new reading communities. In this process, merchandise becomes more than a marketing tool; it becomes a sensory gateway through which readers experience a book's identity and worldview. Items that connect naturally with that world should not be dismissed as substitutes for books. Their role is to carry the emotional resonance of a book into everyday life even after the last page is closed. That, ultimately, is the simplest and most powerful strength of book-themed merchandise.

### **The continuing power of book-themed merchandise**

There are concerns that merchandise is drawing more attention than the books themselves. However, in reality, many readers rediscover books through merchandise - people often pick up a book after noticing its accompanying merchandise, or they track down a title because they encountered a product engraved with a favorite author's line at bookstores and book fairs. In the coming years, merchandise is likely to become a mechanism that increases the amount of time readers dwell in the publishing ecosystem. Rather than ending as one-off purchases, these items are forming structures that extend into communities and lifestyles - further strengthening their influence. Pop-up exhibitions and

collaboration products continue to capture readers' interest and translate into actual sales, showing that merchandise has become an indispensable marketing element in the publishing market. Of course, if merchandise dilutes the essence of books or remains at the level of copying formulas from previous successes, readers will quickly feel fatigued. What ultimately matters is not the "object" itself, but how "authentically" it expands the experience books create. Merchandise is not meant to replace books. It should function as a pathway that reignites curiosity about books - a device that leads readers back to reading them. It flexibly reshapes the ways readers encounter books - encouraging them to pick up a title, linger with it longer, and giving them something to remember the experience by. As the act of reading stretches beyond paper and into objects embedded in daily life, the rise of book-themed merchandise has become more than a passing fad, but a sustained force expanding the publishing market.

## SPECIAL PROJECT

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[New Ways of Walking Through Cities ⑫]

# The Global Hub of Culture and the Arts: London

Written by Jung Hwan-Jung

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Once called “the empire on which the sun never sets,” Britain has seen its tangible influence fade over the two centuries since its golden age in the 19th and 20th centuries, yet its symbolic power remains intact. London, a city that still holds the historical and cultural legacy built during the days of the British Empire, exemplifies this most clearly. This is why tracing the history of London back to its beginnings as the Roman fortress of Londinium is no easy task, for the meanings contained within its past are countless. London is also a city inseparable from one of humanity’s most significant milestones - the Industrial Revolution. During the Industrial Revolution, London was one of the fastest-growing cities in the world in terms of population. Its population,



which stood at about one million in the early 19th century, rose to around 2.68 million in 1851 and reached about 6.54 million by 1901 - an almost sixfold increase in just a hundred years. These figures prove that it is no exaggeration to say that the world's transformation began in London. From that time on, people from all over the world flocked to the city. The sweat and struggles of those who came to London in search of new challenges during this era of change became the foundation upon which the city grew into a symbol of civilization itself. Since then, London has long served as both the birthplace and the source of what many refer to as "Western culture." From literature, music, and art to fashion, media, and sports, much of what continues to fascinate and excite the world, first began in London.

From Britain's great playwright, Shakespeare, to world-renowned

author J.K. Rowling, writer of the *Harry Potter* series; from countless musicians represented by The Beatles to the city's passionate sports culture - football and tennis alike - and the film locations of *Notting Hill* and *Kingsman*, London offers them all. What is remarkable is that, regardless of era or genre, these names are universally familiar worldwide. That is why the stream of people visiting London never ceases: it is a city where the familiar feels new, where one can encounter both ancient history and ever-changing trends.

### A North Korean diplomat decides to defect in London



*The Pyongyang Lady from London*

North Korea is known as one of the most closed countries in the world. It is why it is rare to encounter North Korean people anywhere in the world. Even so, when you tell locals during a trip to Europe that you are from Korea, they sometimes ask, “South or North?” This is because, unexpectedly, North Korea maintains

embassies and diplomatic relations with several European countries - one of which is the United Kingdom.

The author of *The Pyongyang Lady from London* (The Miracle) was a North Korean diplomat who lived in Copenhagen, Denmark, and Stockholm, Sweden, before eventually residing in London, the UK, where she defected to South Korea. Although she had received a special education in North Korea, 8 years of living abroad made her view the realities of her country with greater objectivity. Among those years, her life in London played a decisive role. Living near the Korean community in New Malden, about 20 minutes by train from central London, she became fascinated by South Korean culture and products.

“The happier my life in London became, the darker and more daunting the thought of returning to North Korea grew. I kept wondering - could I possibly live a normal life there, now that I had changed so much from who I once was? I wasn't sure I could. As the time to return approached, I couldn't shake off the fear and anxiety that overwhelmed me inside.”

- from *The Pyongyang Lady from London*

The first duty assigned to North Korean diplomats is to spread the message of the greatness of the country's Juche ideology. Yet, the country's support is minimal. Even as diplomats, they must earn their own money to cover living expenses, including medical

bills. In such circumstances, the free and open life of South Koreans that the author witnessed naturally became an object of admiration and curiosity. Meanwhile, her family, who had been recalled to North Korea, came face to face with a changed Pyongyang. The competition to show loyalty to the new leader, Kim Jong-Un, had grown unbearably intense, and bribery was rampant in every field. At a time when the country's internal situation was worsening, the author was ordered to return to London, and there she made a decision for her family's future. London ultimately became both the turning point and the new beginning of their lives.

### From Busan to London, an imaginary journey by train



*From Busan to London by Train*

Many travelers prefer train journeys. It is because they offer the leisure of enjoying the travel process itself while keeping schedules largely predictable. Also, depending on the route, some trains are equipped with dining cars, sleeping compartments,

and even shower facilities, turning travel into both an experience and a form of romance. Europe is the best place to enjoy the full charm of such train travel. From Cabo da Roca in Portugal, the westernmost point of the continent, to Vladivostok in Russia, the easternmost city, an immense railway network connects cities across the land. The picture book, *From Busan to London by Train* (Kidari Book), portrays a warm, imaginary journey of three generations of a family, traveling on the Trans-Siberian Railway through Berlin, Paris, Rome, and Milan, before finally arriving in London.

“When I asked Mom where we were going this time, she said we would be heading to the island nation of England. / ‘If it’s an island, why are we taking a train?’ I asked. / ‘Because the train we will ride will pass through a tunnel under the sea,’ she said. / I was so surprised - imagine traveling beneath the sea by train!”

- from *From Busan to London by Train*

In 1994, the “Eurostar” began operating beneath the Dover Strait, linking London and Paris, and making Britain part of Europe’s vast railway network. Britain, in fact, is the birthplace of the railway. George Stephenson, who developed the steam locomotive and the railway transport system, was a British engineer whose design of a 1,435-millimeter track gauge became the global standard, connecting not only Europe, but the entire world today.

However, because South Korea remains in a state of armistice with North Korea, travelers cannot reach Europe by rail without detouring by air or sea, leaving the country isolated like an island. In contrast, North Korea can reach Europe by train through China or Russia. In *The Pyongyang Lady from London*, there is even a scene describing North Korean diplomats dispatched to Europe by train, a cheaper alternative to flying.

If the severed railway lines of the Korean Peninsula were ever fully reconnected, it would be possible to embark on a journey from Busan, at the edge of the Pacific Ocean, across the Dover Strait that links the North Sea and the Atlantic, and arrive at St. Pancras Station in London. It would surely become one of the most beautiful journeys dreamed of by train travelers around the world.

### The unique charm of London, the city of design

British design is renowned worldwide for its history and quality. Not only mass-produced goods, but also many prototypes of classic clothing and housing originated in Britain. The Victorian fashions and architectural styles of the 19th century - icons of their time that came to represent all of Europe - also began in Britain, more precisely in London.

In *A Walk Through London Design* (Namusoo Book), the author explores the design sensibility found in the London Underground. London, which began digging tunnels and operating underground steam locomotives as early as 1863, had already mastered conveying



*A Walk Through London Design*

simple yet clear and diverse information through its subway maps. It can be said that the origin of subway map design around the world today began in London.

“The first map of the London Underground, designed in 1931 by electrical engineer Harry Beck, was a kind of revolution that even changed the way people thought. Believing that maps depicting detailed streets and geographical features were unsuitable for the underground, Beck created a simplified map using straight and diagonal geometric lines.”

*- from A Walk Through London Design*

It is not only the subway maps that boast clarity and high legibility. The author, who admits to having a poor sense of direction, recounts finding her destination in London - a city of narrow and intricate alleyways - using only street names and postal codes. This stands as proof of the excellence of the city's urban and address

system design. In addition, London is home to some of the world's most renowned design universities and research institutes, attracting people from all over the world who reinterpret their inspiration into new forms of art. This is one of the reasons London continues to thrive as a city of design.

Having majored in visual design at university and worked as the head of a design research team at a stationery company in Korea, the author provides an engaging and friendly introduction to London's many design elements. She kindly explains in detail how ordinary things, such as walls and trash cans, are reinvented through ingenious ideas. The book serves as an excellent guide for those seeking a fresh perspective on London. It also introduces various open studios unique to London, offering glimpses into the daily lives and creative processes of its designers.



Many people think of London as both the center of culture and a romantic city. It is a place where anyone can find something to enjoy, with an abundance of content across every field - culture, art, history, architecture, fashion, sports, music, and design. For that reason, London is considered one of the world's most representative global cities, drawing international students and immigrants from across the globe. It is estimated that there are at least 50 immigrant communities in London, each with populations exceeding 10 thousand. In terms of diversity, the city stands on par with New York, often called the world's greatest global metropolis. The election of Rishi Sunak, a British prime minister of Indian descent and Hindu faith, as the 79th leader of the UK, demonstrates the inclusivity of both London and Britain as a whole.

Despite being home to so many backgrounds and ways of life, London never loses its own sense of order. People remain unfazed when Royal Guards pass by on horseback or when sudden rain begins to fall, and they continue to drink hot tea even on warm days. Perhaps this composure comes from living in the only city in the world that sets the standard for Coordinated Universal Time (UTC), the basis of global time itself.

## EXPORT CASE

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# The Secret Weapon: How Data Connects Global Publishing

Written by Naoko LEE (CEO of LEE's Literary Agency)

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LEE's Literary Agency, founded in 2008 in Taiwan, is a rights agency specializing in cross-border licensing across Asia and beyond. It represents both Asian and international publishers, focusing on building data-driven connections between markets through translation rights and global collaboration. From the very beginning, LEE's Literary Agency aimed not merely to bring foreign copyrights into Taiwan, but to help publishers across markets recognize and engage with one another. Our very first project was representing an American author and closing 17 deals within 1 year — including one with a major US publisher. At the time, I had no idea that this experience would one day allow me to witness the shifting map of the Asian publishing landscape.

## Insights into the global publishing market

Through countless cross-border collaborations and negotiations over the past years, I gradually came to understand how language and culture reshape the value of a book. Two particular experiences deepened my reflections on this industry. The first took place at the Taipei International Book Exhibition one year ago. A general manager of a foreign publisher's Taiwan branch said to me, "In my country, we're among the top five publishing houses. I'm curious — once our books are licensed and published in Taiwan, is this 'top five' status still the same?" At that moment, I realized that competition in publishing is not only about content or market reach, but about information asymmetry. With transparent data on translation rights, publishers can better understand their real position in the global network. For instance, a publisher that has long worked with only a few familiar partners might discover new potential buyers once it sees where its competitors are selling. **Data transparency, in this sense, becomes a tool not only for analysis but for redefining relationships and expanding collaboration.**

The second story comes from a foreign publisher we have worked with for years. In Asia, their licensing performance had always been steady — so much so that they rarely needed to engage in active promotion. Simply responding to rights offers from different countries was enough to keep them fully occupied. Yet their leadership was not satisfied with maintaining success; they



2025 Taipei International Book Exhibition

wanted to expand beyond Asia. So, their rights manager asked if we would help them explore the global market. Our work involved identifying potential partners, arranging meetings at international book fairs, interpreting during one-on-one sessions, and handling follow-ups afterward. It was far beyond the usual scope of an agency's duties, but driven by passion, I agreed. Unexpectedly, that collaboration marked the beginning of our new phase — cross-border publishing matchmaking.

## Inside the K-Book Ecosystem and Its Global Expansion

Even before establishing LEE's Literary Agency, I had already connected with the Literature Translation Institute of Korea (LTI Korea) through the Seoul International Book Fair. Since our first “3-in-1 Picture Book Fair” collaboration with Korean publishers in 2017, followed by a renewed partnership with the Korea Picture Book Publishers Association in 2024, and most recently the K-Book Market in Taipei in 2025, I have once again witnessed how Korea's publishing strength is supported by long-term vision and solid government backing.

To be honest, the format of the K-Book Market is not entirely



2024 3-in-1 Picture Book Fair with KPIPA

new. In earlier years, Japan often hosted similar “rights business meetings” across Southeast Asia to cultivate new partnerships. Many major book fairs also include copyright matchmaking sessions where local and foreign publishers explore potential collaborations. From my experience, K-Book operates in two main modes: one is the large-scale 100-to-100 session in Seoul, where global buyers meet Korean publishers one-on-one; the other is a smaller overseas tour of about ten to twenty Korean publishers, who visit other countries for intensive meetings. Each has its rhythm, but both share one thing in common — they never leave opportunities to luck.

If I were to summarize the key difference between K-Book and similar systems elsewhere, it would be proactivity. Let’s go back to the two stories I mentioned earlier. When faced with the first question, my answer at that time was this: “To know your ranking among foreign publishers in Taiwan’s translation market, you would need a database capable of searching by language, category, publisher, author, and ISBN — data accurate enough to support meaningful analysis. Unfortunately, no such database exists… yet.”



2025 Frankfurt Book Fair

To the second story, we indeed traveled with that publisher to the London Book Fair, BookExpo America, and the Frankfurt Book Fair. We started by researching publishers on Amazon, sorting them by language and category, gathering contact information, arranging meetings, interpreting on-site, and following up afterward. The entire process took over six months — and all this effort served only one client. For a rights agency, it was highly labor-intensive and economically unsustainable.

### **Data-driven global publishing matching**

You might be wondering now: “Is there really still no better solution?”, “Must every publisher go through this same exhausting process to explore different markets?”, “Does every new category mean starting all over again — two weeks to a month of research each time?” Well, such a solution does exist. At the K-Book Market in Taipei in July 2025, we used a new search tool that instantly identified all Taiwanese publishers with experience publishing Korean books. From 2020 to 2025, guess how many there were? The answer is 164 publishers.

To put that into perspective: the event itself hosted about eighty Taiwanese participants — just two weeks after Taiwan was the Guest of Honor at the Seoul Book Fair. We could even further break down the data by language, category, and market share, revealing the publishing strengths of each segment. Now, I can finally answer that old question: “If you tell me which competitors you’d like to

compare with, the results will appear within seconds.” Or put differently: “No matter which language or market you want to explore, with just a few clicks you can find your potential buyers.” Moreover, whether you are a buyer or a seller, the system allows you to generate a fully updated rights catalogue for book fairs — just under 5 minutes. We define “buyers” as local publishers who have acquired and released translated editions. By cross-analyzing publication dates and genres, we can infer their preferences and tailor precise recommendation lists. For an agency like ours in Taiwan, this means starting from existing translated editions and, through big-data matching, swiftly identifying suitable publishers across the world.

Such a system also enables Korean titles to reach global markets more efficiently — even beyond the route of “licensed in Taiwan first, then exported elsewhere.” Any translated edition can potentially spark interest in neighboring regions, extending its cultural reach — as long as you know your target. You may wonder what kind of system can truly handle all this. It was first created simply to address our own matchmaking needs at LEE’s Literary Agency — but soon we realized this wasn’t just our problem. It was everyone’s. If you’d like to experience it yourself, visit Book Fair Plus. If the K-Book matchmaking platform could one day be integrated with a data system like BFP, it could identify overseas buyers with greater accuracy and significantly increase the success rate of international licensing. To me, it’s more than just a tool — it’s a way for the world’s publishers to truly see one another.

## ONE-LINER QUOTES

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# Books That Help Us Grow into Ourselves

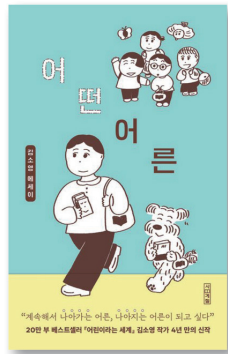
Director of Seonyu Library's Pick

Written by Kim Sang-Myung (Director of Seonyu Library)

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Kim Sang-Myung is the director of Seonyu Library in Yeongdeungpo-gu, Seoul, where he established and operates "Sairo," a dedicated space for teenagers. Sairo goes beyond a simple study or reading room – it is a cultural complex designed to support teenagers' play, exploration, and social interaction. With diverse zones such as the Game Zone, Baking Zone, and Music Zone, the space offers various programs that support young people's growth, earning praise as a new model for public libraries. Building on this success, Seonyu Library received the Presidential Award in the 2025 National Evaluation on Public Library Management.

When I was organizing Sairo, a specialized space for teenagers at Seonyu Library, I wanted them to experience as many kinds of content as possible. Cultural exposure during adolescence helps them grow, and ultimately brings them closer not only to libraries



### *Some Adults*

Written by Kim So-Yeong,  
published by Sakyajul Publishing



Adults in the neighborhood have,  
knowingly or unknowingly,  
already appeared in the background of children's lives.  
And, children, are also influencing my own life,  
as neighbors.

but also to books. As I had hoped, the students began visiting the library more often, becoming familiar and comfortable with books. Some would come for other reasons, yet before long, I would see them naturally reaching for books from the shelves. It is part of the library's role to select engaging and meaningful young adult literature for such readers. Together with the librarians at Seonyu Library, I explored a range of Young Adult titles, and one that caught my attention was *Some Adults*. Even its title prompts reflection: for young readers, the question "What kind of adult will I become?" and for grown-ups, "What kind of adult am I?" The book does not seek to divide adults into good or bad. Instead, it invites us to examine our attitude and mindset toward children, and toward adults themselves. Children are mirrors of adults; the pace and direction of their growth can shift depending on the adults they encounter. That is why, regardless of age, we must keep striving to become better adults. What kind of adults we become is, after all, up to us.



### *Almond*

Written by Sohn Won-Pyung,  
published by Dazzling Publishers



Most people felt something, yet did nothing –  
and even as they claimed to understand,  
they forgot just as easily.

Another book I would like to recommend to young readers is Sohn Won-Pyung’s *Almond*. Loved widely as a must-read among teenagers, *Almond* resonates deeply with adolescents who feel intense emotions yet struggle to express them, while offering warmth even to adults whose emotional dryness and lack of communication have left their lives parched. It remains both a bestseller and a steady seller, with over one million copies sold in Korea.

The protagonist, “Yoon-Jae,” has a congenital condition that makes emotional expression difficult. After a tragic accident takes his family away, Yoon-Jae meets Gonyi, a friend whose explosive expressiveness starkly contrasts his own. Through their encounters, marked by wounds, conflict, and unexpected friendship, the two boys grow up in different yet intertwining ways. While the story portrays the sorrow of a protagonist who cannot feel emotions, it also shows that one’s life can change entirely depending on whom one meets, even in a harsh world. It

reminds us that it is easy to trap someone inside our prejudices, but far harder to share emotions and truly empathize. Reflecting on the author's words - "It is love that turns humans into humans, and also love that turns them into monsters" - I cannot help but think that empathizing with and understanding another's emotions is itself an act of love. I recommend this book with the hope that its message will reach young readers.

## KNOWLEDGE

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# The Third Chapter of the Korea Picture Book Award: The New Landscape of Korean Picture Books

Written by Kim Min-Hwa  
(Professor in the Department of Early Childhood Education at Shinhan University, Chair of the Jury of the 2025 Korea Picture Book Award)

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## The Introduction of the “Korea Picture Book Award” and the Winners in 2025

The “Korea Picture Book Award,” jointly organized by the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism (MCST) and the Publication Industry Promotion Agency of Korea (KPIPA), marks its 3rd year since its launch in 2023. This year, a total of 9 titles were selected: 2 Grand Prize winners (one each in Fiction and Nonfiction), 6 Special Prize winners (2 Minister of Culture, Sports, and Tourism Awards and 4 President of the Publication Industry Promotion Agency of Korea Awards), and 1 Rookie of the Year Award recipient. Eligible works were picture books created, published, and distributed in Korea between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025.



to enjoy picture books. Through tactile and spatial cues, reading expands into a multisensory experience. In particular, the fiction category has deepened emotional resonance through narrative experimentation, while the nonfiction category has opened new intersections between knowledge and art by combining factual organization with aesthetic composition. Korean picture books naturally extend into classrooms, exhibitions, and community programs, establishing themselves as models that originate locally and are read globally. These characteristics can be observed in the award-winning titles organized by theme.

### Winners of the 2025 Korea Picture Book Award

Category		Title	Author	Publisher
Grand Prize	Fiction	<i>A DOT, A LINE, AND A BIRD</i>	Zo-O	Changbi Publishers
	Nonfiction	<i>What Wonderful Beetles</i>	Kim Yoo-Dae	Iyagikot Publishing
Special Prize (Minister of Culture, Sports, and Tourism Award)		<i>The Boy Who is Crazy About Flowers</i>	Kim Dong-Sung	Borim Press
		<i>When We Touch the Elephant</i>	Oum Jeong-Soon	Woorischool
Special Prize (President of the Publication Industry Promotion Agency of Korea Award)		<i>The Memory of the Building</i>	Choi Kyung-Sik, O Sori, Hong Ji-Hae	Sakyejul Publishing
		<i>The Guardians of Gyeongbokgung</i>	Cho Soo-Jin	Uhheung-Project
		<i>A Boy with a Bronze Helmet</i>	So Yun-Kyoung	Bombyeott Publishing Co.
		<i>Cheer</i>	Gong Eun-Hye	Maummoja
Rookie of the Year Award		<i>Come In</i>	Min Byoung-Kwon	Gilbut Children Publishing Co., Ltd.

## Image-Led Ecological and Environmental Sensibility: Grand Prize Winners in Fiction and Nonfiction

*A DOT, A LINE, AND A BIRD* (Changbi Publishers), which received the Grand Prize in the Fiction category, is largely driven by the power of “image and rhythm.” Using the motif of birds that vanish after colliding with urban structures, the book creates a sense of rhythm through the variations of dots, lines, and forms across its pages. With a minimalist visual language that calibrates tension and pause, the accumulated kinetic energy evokes a heartbeat that pulses with the themes of “solidarity” and “coexistence.” By merging contemporary issues of environmental awareness and respect for life with an aesthetic form, the work delivers a compelling social message that resonates across cultural boundaries, without relying on language.



*A DOT, A LINE, AND A BIRD*

*What Wonderful Beetles* (Iyagikot Publishing), the Grand Prize winner in the Nonfiction category, boldly expands the shapes and patterns of beetles into a large-format canvas. Its compositions,

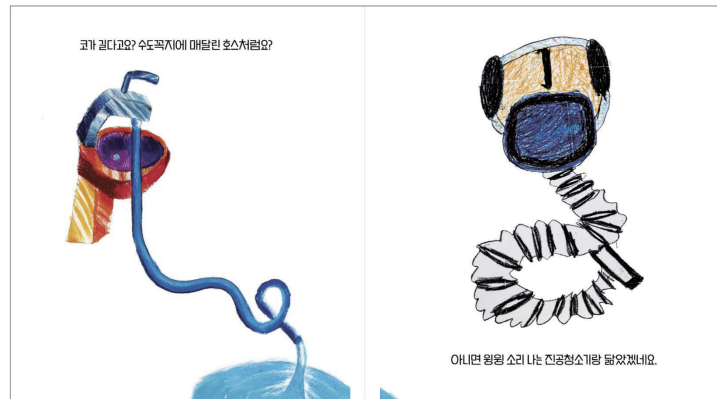
grounded in precise observation, are harmonized with theatrical timing and comic beats. Balancing informational content with narrative pleasure, the work restores the “joy of learning new things.” If supplemented with information on local native species, it could be readily adapted for localized editions in various countries.



*What Wonderful Beetles*

**Participatory Nonfiction that Awakens the Senses:  
Special Prize (Minister of Culture, Sports, and Tourism Award)**

*When We Touch the Elephant* (Woorischool), winner of the Special Prize (Minister of Culture, Sports, and Tourism Award), is both a record and a creative picture book born from a collaborative project in which visually impaired children and the artist explored an elephant through “imagination, touch, and expression.” The work subverts the long-standing parable of “blind men and an elephant (盲人摸象),” presenting differences in sensory perception not as deficiencies, but as sources of creativity.



*When We Touch the Elephant*

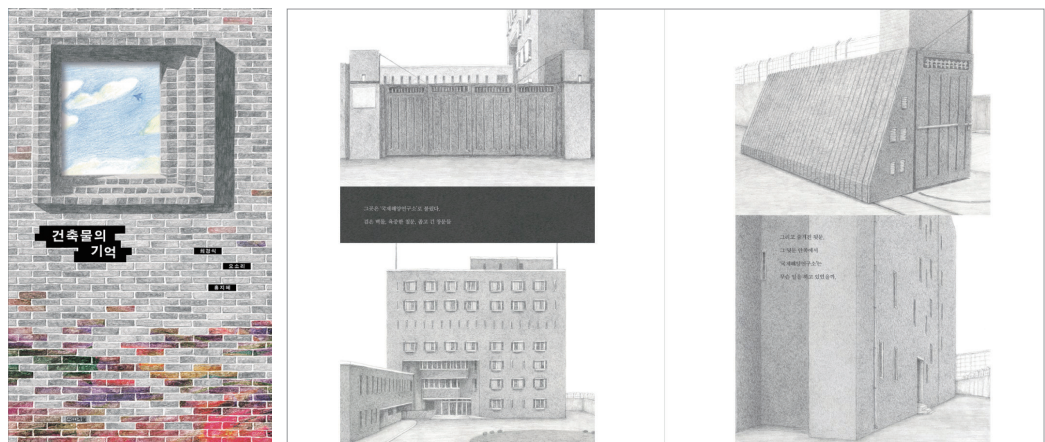
If *A DOT, A LINE, AND A BIRD* stimulates the senses through the rhythm of images that operate independently of text, *What Wonderful Beetles* throws the gates of sensory experience wide open through its bold close-ups. Because these works turn the act of reading itself into an “experience,” they seamlessly connect with inclusive programs in museums and public libraries.

### Place and Memory:

**Reading History from a New Perspective - Special Prize  
(President of the Publication Industry Promotion Agency of  
Korea Award)**

*The Memory of the Building* (Sakyejul Publishing), which received the Special Prize (President of the Publication Industry Promotion Agency of Korea Award), brings readers to a “place” that bears witness to the dark era of Korean democracy. Its setting, the “Namyong-dong Anti-Communist Branch of the Korean National Security Headquarters,” was a site of interrogation and torture

during the authoritarian period, and is now preserved and utilized as the National Museum of Korean Democracy. The book’s method of “reading the time of a place” by juxtaposing architectural details with narrative elements connects naturally to themes of civic education and even to possibilities for city branding.



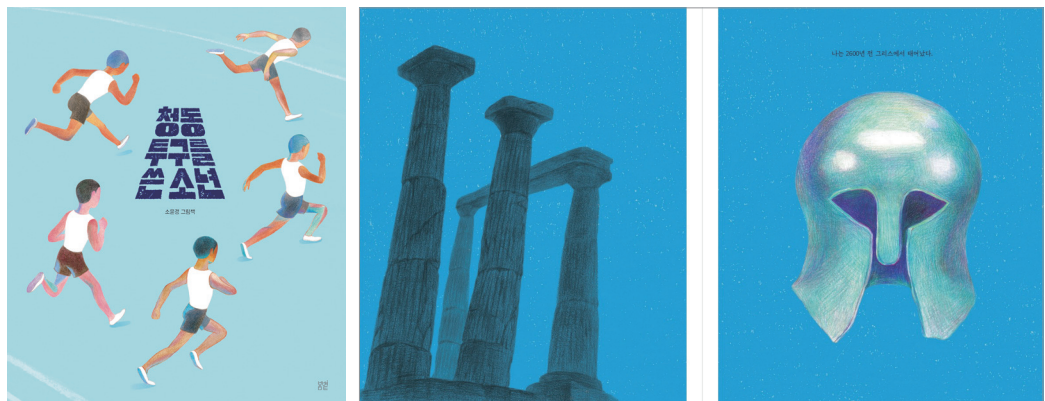
*The Memory of the Building*

*The Guardians of Gyeongbokgung* (Uhheung-Project), which also received the Special Prize (President of the Publication Industry Promotion Agency of Korea Award), is set in Gyeongbokgung Palace (built in 1395), the main royal palace of the Joseon dynasty. By combining the palace’s symbolic patterns and guardian creatures with imagination, the work transforms “living heritage” into a contemporary narrative. Its strategy of linking traditional architecture and symbolic patterns with a child’s imaginative play demonstrates the distinctive strength of Korean picture books in “contemporizing cultural heritage.”



*The Guardians of Gyeongbokgung*

*A Boy with a Bronze Helmet* (Bombyeott Publishing Co.), also another winner of the Special Prize (President of the Publication Industry Promotion Agency of Korea Award), adopts as its narrator the Ancient Greek Bronze Helmet - a national treasure preserved in the National Museum of Korea - that was awarded to Sohn Kee-Chung, the Korean marathoner who won the gold medal at the 1936 Berlin Olympics, but only much later reclaimed it in his own name. Told from the object's perspective, this historical picture book captures a boy's experience during the colonial era. Sohn's



*A Boy with a Bronze Helmet*

story - also remembered for the incident in which the Japanese flag on his uniform was concealed during the medal ceremony - condenses the tensions of colonial reality and identity into a narrative that resonates across borders of nationality and era, allowing anyone to empathize with it.

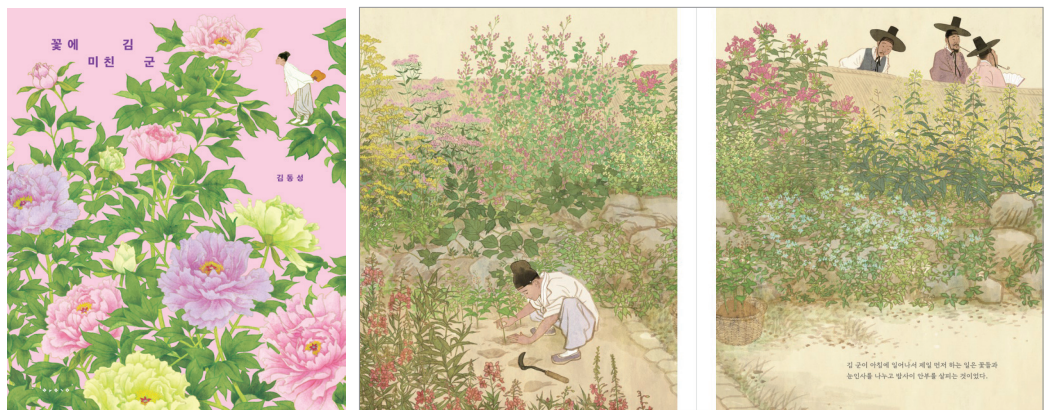
### The Moment When the Observation of Nature Turns Into Awe

*Cheer* (Maummoja), another recipient of the Special Prize (President of the Publication Industry Promotion Agency of Korea Award), presents a nature narrative that reveals the variations of the four seasons and the sanctity of life through visual storytelling with minimal reliance on text. Depicting the seasonal flow, from the stillness of winter to the buds and forests of spring, the book visualizes the breath of the four seasons through a rhythm of color, form, blank space, repetition, and pause, sculpturally amplifying the emotions of “care–growth–expansion.” When opening its cover, a single tree fills the reader’s field of vision, and with each



*Cheer*

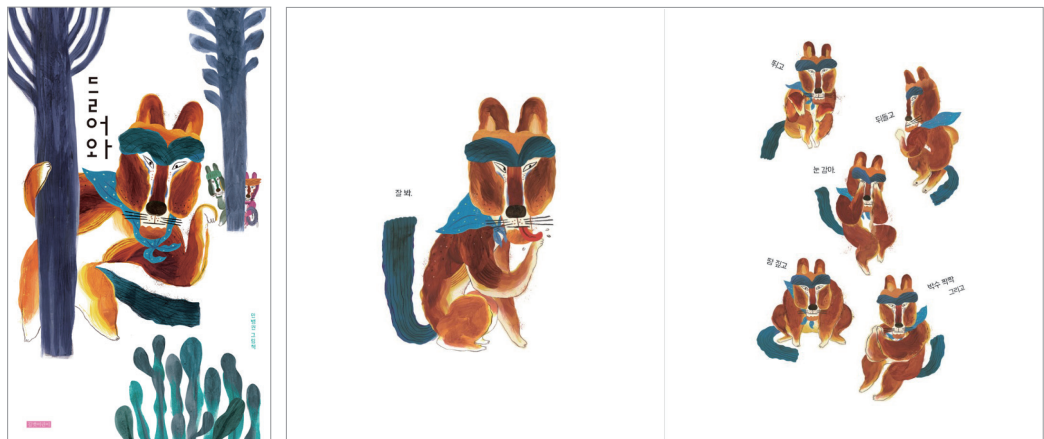
turn of the page, the “growing time” of life becomes palpable, allowing the title, “cheer,” to be felt as nature’s encouragement. *The Boy Who is Crazy About Flower* (Borim Press), winner of the Special Prize (Minister of Culture, Sports, and Tourism Award), expands simple observation into sensory immersion and an experience of time through a rhythm of close-up views that look closely into the story, and wide shots that step back, combined with the carefully designed tempo of page turns. Minimal text, the delicate balance of color, line, and blank space, the texture and bleed of paper, and even the binding method all shape the atmosphere of the page, quietly whispering to the reader: “Take your time.” Yet, the essence of this work lies not in the flower itself, but in how the act of loving something becomes, in the end, a process of learning the order of life. Positioned at the boundary between traditional Korean painting and book art, the work also has strong potential to expand into a crossover edition.



*The Boy Who is Crazy About Flower*

## When Play Becomes Power: Critical Literacy

*Come In* (Gilbut Children Publishing Co., Ltd.), the winner of the Rookie of the Year Award, is a bold work that depicts, with suspense, how a predator exploits the rules to lure the weak. A wolf entices the other animals into a “jump-rope game,” declaring, “Follow the rules and live. Break them and die.” As the scenes progress, the animals disappear one by one while the wolf’s belly grows larger. Yet a twist awaits: the wolf becomes ensnared in its own deception. The book prompts readers to visually deduce the answers to questions such as “Who was turning the rope?” and “Why did the children disappear?” Ultimately, it shows how “play” can become a mechanism of authority and naturally invokes “critical literacy,” engaging themes of power and control, the language of deception, and an individual’s safety within a group.



*Come In*

## The Significance of the “Korea Picture Book Award”

The mechanism that gathers and articulates this current landscape of Korean picture books into an institutional language is precisely the “Korea Picture Book Award.” Its purpose is not to compete with prestigious international awards, but to formalize the distinctive strengths of Korean picture books as a public standard - verified, visualized, and spread each year. Through a pathway that links creation, selection, archiving (K-Book), and introduction (*K-Book Trends*), the award’s experiments in form and in inclusive design are shared simultaneously with both the Korean market and international audiences. The development over the past two decades, from a school-centered reading culture to an experimental period combining design, editing, and research, is now being consolidated and updated annually through the “Korea Picture Book Award,” as an “annual benchmark” for Korean picture books.



2025 Korea Picture Book Awards Ceremony

The outcomes of the “Korea Picture Book Award” are clear for each player in the market. For authors, it encourages new attempts - such as larger formats, special bookbinding, and nonfiction grounded in research and reportage - while also providing momentum for their following works. Readers, regardless of age, language, or reading level, can experience more frequent multisensory reading. In addition to learning through classrooms, libraries, and museums, they can encounter these works again in exhibition programs. For publishers, the award serves as a reliable marker for an integrated flow of rights proposals, educational programs, and exhibition planning. It also enables them to reorganize and present their titles thematically, covering local heritage, ecology, silent narratives, and more, thus extending the lifespan of their backlist. Ultimately, these achievements translate into cultural capacity. K-picture books, read, seen, and produced as public cultural assets, connect naturally with city branding, cultural heritage, and civic education, while serving as annually updated international reference points for overseas editors. In short, the “Korea Picture Book Award” is more than a prize for outstanding works; it is a public platform that standardizes the language and sensibility of Korean picture books each year, driving domestic growth and steadily advancing their presence in global markets.

## KOREAN PUBLISHERS

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### Storybowl

A bowl that holds thoughtful, heartwarming stories

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Everyone, at least once in childhood, would have imagined something like this: a drawing on a blank sheet of paper suddenly popping out and speaking to you. Picture book author Baek Hee-Na brings that very imagination into reality - she creates three-dimensional dolls of her characters and places them into her scenes. With her fingertips, she delicately builds the world of her stories, transforming imagination into something tangible. In 2005, she was selected as “Illustrator of the Year” at the Bologna Ragazzi Awards, gaining recognition not only in Korea, but also abroad. In 2020, she became the first Korean recipient of the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award, often called the Nobel Prize of children’s literature. Storybowl, a publishing house Baek Hee-Na founded to ensure a more creative and independent environment, is expand-

ing the artistic universe beyond Korea and into the world, and beyond picture books into animation, stage performances, and more.

\* *K-Book Trends* Vol. 22 – Check out the artistic world of picture book author Baek Hee-Na



The logo consists of the word "Storybowl" in a bold, black, sans-serif font, centered within a white rounded rectangular border.

Logo of Storybowl

It's a pleasure to have you with us on *K-Book Trends*. Please introduce Storybowl to our international readers, including the company name.

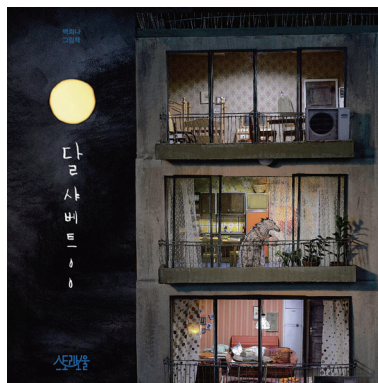
Storybowl is the name Baek Hee-Na first chose when she created her own publishing house in 2011. It means “a bowl that holds stories,” reflecting the author’s love for both storytelling and food. Although the logo has changed since then, the original logo was literally shaped like a rice bowl. Storybowl aims to become a publisher that can hold the diverse stories and textures found in Baek Hee-Na’s artistic world.

The birth of Storybowl itself is also interesting. It first began as Baek’s one-person publishing house in 2011 and was later reestablished in 2023. Could you tell us more about the reason and the process behind that?

After publishing *Cloud Bread* (Hansol Soobook), Baek went through a difficult time due to a copyright dispute with the publisher,

which forced her to stop creating works for 7 years. However, participating in the 2009 Bologna Children’s Book Fair reignited her passion, and she decided, “Let’s go independent.” That was the beginning of a new chapter. Through independent publishing, she released the picture book *Moon Pops*, personally visiting online bookstore MDs to promote it and delivering the books to bookstores herself. Thankfully, many readers loved *Moon Pops*, allowing her to resume her creative work.

Reflecting on “the childhood days of freely drawing on a blank sheet of paper,” Baek hoped to build a creative environment with true freedom, and to communicate more closely with her readers. With that vision, she reestablished Storybowl in 2023. Today, Storybowl is run by Baek Hee-Na and a team of five staff members. Although making books is demanding work, the company has already released 3 new titles since its founding.



*Moon Pops*

Storybowl publishes exclusively the works of Baek Hee-Na, one of the most celebrated creators in Korean picture books. This must lead to a wide range of collaboration proposals. When you proceed with such collaborations, are there any particular considerations or principles you place special importance on?

Each collaboration requires a slightly different kind of attention and consideration. In the case of the short animated film *Magic Candies*, it was exciting to see the work produced by an overseas studio, but the production process also presented many challenges. Because *Magic Candies* has been deeply loved by so many readers, especially Korean readers, Baek did not want the story's cultural identity to become ambiguous, and she asked the studio to be mindful of that. Toei Animation respected her wishes, investing a full year solely into creating the design concepts for the main character, "Dongdongyi." To capture more realistic backgrounds, the director and production team even visited Seoul to film its streets and apartment complexes. Every aspect of the project received meticulous craftsmanship from these animation experts, and thanks to their efforts, the film was selected as a finalist for the 97th Academy Award for Best Animated Short Film in 2025.

At Storybowl, we believe that the process is just as important as the final result. We collaborate only after thorough internal discussions, considering how deeply the project has been thought out and how it can develop further in the future. Above all, we hold as our top priority the "preservation of the author's artistic

world.” We carefully examine how any collaboration might influence the picture book and how it will reach readers who love the story. In fact, we are often the ones who propose collaboration. Most recently, while producing the audiobook for *Yeoni and the Willow Boy*, we invited *sorikkun* (traditional Korean singer) Lee Ja-Ram as the narrator. She gladly agreed, and thanks to her, we were able to create a remarkable audiobook.



*Magic Candies; Yeoni and the Willow Boy*

Storybowl’s picture books are created through an entirely handcrafted process, making *dakjongyi* (Korean traditional paper, known as *hanji*, made from the inner bark of the paper mulberry tree) dolls, clay figures, and other materials, then photographing them to complete each scene. Compared to typical picture books, the production time and cost must be much higher. What sets this method apart from picture books made through other techniques?

Baek Hee-Na constantly explores the formats and expressive methods that can best convey a story. To help young readers immerse themselves naturally and empathize with the narrative, Baek often uses three-dimensional techniques that closely

resemble real life. In her working notebook, she writes down fragments of narrative ideas or character concepts as they come to mind. She imagines each character's personality and often sketches detailed appearances that match those traits. Based on these ideas, she creates a dummy book, considering the background and setting together, to visualize the story as a whole. This working process was showcased in a small exhibition at the Jeonju International Picture Book Fair (JIPF) this past May.

Baek Hee-Na's dummy books are almost identical to the final published book. After completing the dummy book, she creates the character dolls, constructs the sets, and, when necessary, photographs scenes outdoors. Even with the same set, the photographs can look entirely different depending on the weather, so she selects the shot that best aligns with the scene she envisioned. These images are then brought together into a



Picture book author Baek Hee-Na at work (Source: Storybowl)

finished book. This is the approach Baek Hee-Na prefers, as it reflects the depth of her thought and attention.

Storybowl seems to connect with readers through very direct and intimate methods - handcrafted production, direct trades with neighborhood bookstores, live streams on YouTube and social media, signing events, and more. At the 2025 Seoul International Book Fair (SIBF), where you participated for the first time, you even held Baek Hee-Na's signing event and collaborated on special merchandise. What kind of energy do you gain from communicating so closely with readers?

A book is created by an author and many collaborators. At Storybowl, we work to ensure that Baek Hee-Na and all the staff involved can communicate constantly and work joyfully. Meeting readers with a finished book refined through that process is always exciting and gratifying. Although we are doing many things for the first time and inevitably going through trial and error, we approach everything with the mindset of learning as if it were our first day. By supporting neighborhood bookstores, creating fun merchandise, and hosting more live events and signing events, we hope to move closer to a warm and emotionally connected small community, one step at a time.

To be honest, many of us at Storybowl are introverts. That's why online communication is incredibly valuable to us. Meeting readers face-to-face at book fairs or signings can be nerve-racking, but we prepare with great care and attention because we want the experience to remain a happy memory for them. Even after a

book is released, continuing to share the making of the book and the heart that went into it with readers brings us tremendous joy. The stories we hear from readers onsite give both the author and our team strength and inspire us to dream of the next project. Creating something with sincerity, then meeting readers eye to eye with that work in hand - that is what excites us and leads us into the next story.

“Creating works with sincerity and a kind, honest spirit,  
and meeting readers through them -  
that is what excites us and leads us into the next story.”

You are also producing merchandise such as stickers, masking tapes, and music boxes, in addition to books. Several of your titles, including *Magic Candies* and *The Bathhouse Fairy*, have expanded into the fields of exhibition, film, and stage performance. How do you decide which works to develop into merchandise, and what guides your choice of field?

At Storybowl, we prefer to create merchandise that naturally expands the story. We aim to convey the mood and universe of the work seamlessly, even when presented through other media. Along the way, we have pursued a wide range of collaborations - goods, exhibitions, performances, and audiobooks - and have met many wonderful partners.

The musicals *Magic Candies*, *The Bathhouse Fairy*, and *Moon Pops* have been adapted into popular stage plays and have continued

long-running performances. Some works have also received proposals from Japan and Germany to be developed further in the form of artistic theater, allowing us to explore new possibilities. While exhibitions and performances have so far been carried out mainly through proposals from performance companies, we hope to broaden our scope moving forward, exploring diverse formats both in Korea and abroad, while considering artistic quality, narrative integrity, and sustainable expansion along the way.



*The Bathhouse Fairy*

Baek Hee-Na's global recognition continues to grow, and many of her works have been exported overseas. Among them, are there any titles that received particularly strong responses? And, is there a work that has not yet been exported, but you would especially like to introduce to international readers?

One work that received an especially positive response overseas is *Ppiyak's Mom*. When we participated in the 2024 Göteborg Book Fair in Sweden, local readers reacted with remarkable enthusiasm.

The book's thoughtful portrayal of diverse forms of family, along with the rough yet delicate conte-style drawings, seemed to leave a strong impression. For readers who had previously loved the artist's 3D doll-based works, this book showcased a completely different artistic texture, broadening the perception of her creative range among international audiences.

*The Strange Mom* also resonated strongly with readers overseas. We believe this is because it carries a deeply universal sentiment - "a sense of emotional encouragement for mothers across the world." In addition, *The Bathhouse Fairy*, *Moon Pops*, and *Magic Candies* have continued to be loved not only for their fresh and distinctive visuals, but also for the universal appeal of their settings, such as bathhouses and apartment buildings, which are familiar regardless of cultural background.

As for the work that has not yet been fully exported, but that we would very much like to introduce to international readers, we would choose *Yeoni and the Willow Boy*, which draws on a



*Piyak's Mom; The Strange Mom*

traditional Korean folktale. Its calm tone and the beauty of its empty space evoke deep emotion, and we believe it has strong potential to expand into various formats, including *pansori* (traditional Korean form of musical storytelling performed by a vocalist and drummer) performances and media art exhibitions. Also, *Happy Birthday* has already been exported into several languages and is currently selling abroad, and we hope to see more opportunities in the English-speaking market as well.

You recently published *Bird Cake* - are there any plans for overseas sales? If there are other works currently being prepared for export, could you tell us about them?

*Bird Cake* was published in a small, limited run as a clothbound hardcover edition, with special focus on the tactile quality of its materials and finishing. We tested multiple types of paper to ensure readers felt a sense of warmth when holding the book. Because the original text was written in English, we hope the export process will proceed more smoothly.

Of course, we are also introducing many of Baek Hee-Na's other works to international audiences. Storybowl's website provides an English version, and our catalog is distributed in both Korean and English. We are also wide open to collaboration proposals from abroad. When overseas publishers invite the author to international book fairs, we often introduce the books at accompanying events, such as talks hosted by local libraries or by

Korean Cultural Centers abroad. And beyond books, we also hope to meet international readers more frequently through musicals, performances, and exhibitions.



*Bird Cake*

We look forward to Storybowl's continued journey in delivering stories crafted with the same care and sincerity as your handmade creations. Could you please share your vision for the future?

We believe that very ordinary moments in daily life - a gentle smile, encouraging words, a good meal, a relationship that needs no explanation, a quiet gesture of solace - are profoundly important. This is also Baek Hee-Na's philosophy. Picture books, we feel, are the first works of art a person encounters in life, and an art form they can continue to enjoy until the very end. They are easy to own, easy to revisit, and easy to understand. Going forward, we hope to place greater emphasis on expanding our stories in diverse ways, so that Storybowl's stories can reach even farther into the world.

## KOREAN AUTHORS

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### Poet Na Tae-Joo

Poetry, a language of longing shaped by what is missing

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Poetry is the most distilled form of language - words that can express the heart with absolute clarity. How romantic is someone who knows a poem by heart? And, what if so many people know the very same poem? If we were to choose the single poem most widely known among Koreans, it would

likely be Na Tae-Joo's *Wildflower*. Ever since it appeared on the well-known message board on the exterior of the Kyobo Life building in Gwanghwamun, it has become a nationally beloved poem - yet it continues to linger deeply and resonate with quiet force. The following is an interview with poet Na Tae-Joo, who has engraved poetry in the hearts of the Korean people for more than 55 years.



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.

It's a pleasure to meet you. I am Na Tae-Joo, a poet living in Gongju, Chungcheongnam-do, writing poems in Korean. I made my literary debut in 1971 through the *Shinchunmunye* (신춘문예; annual spring literary contest) hosted by the *Seoul Shinmun*, and this year marks my 55th year of publishing poetry. Over the years, I have released many collections - 53 volumes of original poetry collections, as well as one children's poetry collection and one *sijo* (Korea's traditional three-line poetic form) poetry collection. I worked as



Poem collections: *Under the Bamboo Forest* (Jihye); *Makdong-ri Drawing* (Jihye); *I See You Like a Flower* (Jihye); *With You, Life is Also a Journey* (Yolimwon); essays: *I Promise, It Will Surely Get Better* (Doublebook Publishing); *To Forty* (Bookfolio Books); *Na Tae-Joo's Wildflower Life Lessons* (Needlebook)

an elementary school teacher for 43 years, and since retiring in 2007, I have been a full-time poet, giving literary lectures across Korea.

Before becoming a poet, you worked for many years as a teacher. We wonder what “Teacher Na Tae-Joo” was like. Did your experience as an educator become a source of inspiration or material for your writing?

I lived as an elementary school teacher for 43 years. Thanks to that, I learned to view the world with innocence and to observe the essence of things. I also learned to write by borrowing the language and tone of elementary school children. That naturally became my later method of writing poetry, and I believe it is one of the reasons my work has resonated with readers. I also think that my ability to find poetic subjects in everyday surroundings and small, ordinary things was cultivated through my years as an elementary school teacher.

You made your debut in 1971 in *Seoul Shinmun's Shinchunmunye* with the poem, *Under the Bamboo Forest*. Since then, for more than 44 years, you have been actively writing - not only poetry collections, but also essays and picture book texts. What is it that keeps you writing poems?

There were many things I lacked. I was a man writing poetry with a small build, little formal education, and a life rooted in the countryside. And financially, I was generally quite poor. These deficiencies - this sense of being a minority - stirred a kind of

longing within me. Yes, longing. Longing has always been the most troublesome emotion for me, one that brought many challenges, and one of the lifelong questions I could never fully resolve. And, as I lived with this longing in my heart, poems naturally came to me - many of them. That's right. It was something like a blessing born of deprivation.

“My sense of deprivation stirred a deep longing,  
and as I carried that longing in my heart,  
poems found their way to me, one after another.”

Poem *Wildflower*, included in *Taking on a Slight Purple Hue* (Poetry & Poetics), is a beloved poem nationwide. Despite its brevity, *Wildflower* has offered quiet, lasting comfort to countless readers. How was this poem born?

It was in 2002, as I recall. At the time, I was working as the principal of Sangseo Elementary School in Gongju-si, while also teaching classes. I remember it being a Thursday afternoon. I spent the time in the principal's office with students from grades three to six, reading books, writing, and singing together. When the children began to grow restless, I suggested we step outside. We went out to the grassy field on the school grounds and held a “wildflower drawing” class. But, the children drew the flowers however they wished. None of their drawings resembled actual wildflowers. So, I found myself scolding them gently, saying the same thing several

times: “Kids, if you want to draw a wildflower, you have to look at it closely, and for a long time. Only then will it appear beautiful and lovable to you.” After saying this, I handed out new sheets of paper to the students who had drawn theirs incorrectly and told them to try again. And, they obediently took the paper and went back to draw once more. Their willingness was endearing - so lovely, in fact, that I couldn’t help but call out to them as they walked away: “That’s right. And the same goes for all of you.”

When the wildflower drawing class ended and I returned to the principal’s office, I wrote down those very words I had just spoken, added a title - *Wildflower* - and the poem was complete. In a way, the children wrote that poem for me. It was truly a work born from my long years as an elementary school teacher and from the closeness I shared with my students. I am grateful for it.

*Wildflower 1*

Look closely.

It’s so pretty.

Take a long look.

It’s so lovely.

Like you.

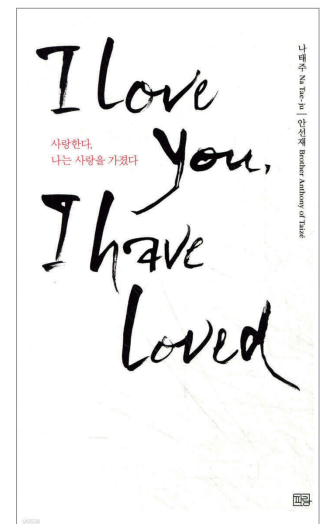
Source: *I Love You, I Have Loved*

Not only *Wildflower*, but many of your works also feature images of grass and flowers. Is there a particular reason for this?

Perhaps it is because I have lived my entire life without leaving the countryside. When you live in a rural place, you encounter plants often and become familiar with them. And, the most beautiful and lovable part of any plant is, of course, its flower. Flowers are also used as symbols representing what is most beautiful and noble. That may be why the word “flower” appears so frequently in my poems.

In May, your collection, *I Love You, I Have Loved* (Parang), featuring 126 of your representative poems in English translation, was published. Looking back on so many works, it must have felt quite meaningful. How did you choose which poems would represent your body of work?

Ah, you must be referring to the collection translated by Brother Anthony of Taizé. Actually, I selected a very large number of poems and handed them all to him. I wanted to give him a wide range of choices. From there, he read through them in order and chose the pieces that spoke to him, and translated those works. So, the final selection of poems was not made by me, but by Brother Anthony. And in my view, that was entirely appropriate, and the right choice.



*I Love You, I Have Loved*

You are also well known for your love of *Hangul* (Korean alphabet), not only for your use of pure Korean words, but also for releasing the “Na Tae-Joo font,” a *Hangul* typeface, free of charge. Korean literature, especially poetry, often loses much of its charm due to the limitations of translation, which is truly unfortunate. How did it feel to read your own works in English through *I Love You, I Have Loved*, which we mentioned earlier?

I must admit that my ability to read English is quite poor. Even so, when I slowly made my way through Brother Anthony’s translations, the meaning came through very strongly. In some cases, the feeling was even more powerful than when I read the poem in Korean. That is how perfectly the translation had been done. In that respect, I am deeply satisfied with Brother Anthony’s works. People often say that my poems are short, simple, easy to read, and, in certain lines, have a clear impact. I believe those qualities also played a role in making the translation process smoother.

But, I have another wish. *Hangul* is known around the world as a scientific script that is easy to learn. If young readers across the globe would learn *Hangul* and read my poems in the original Korean, that would be, if not a dream, then certainly a heartfelt wish of mine.



The “Na Tae-Joo font”

You are currently continuing your creative work at the Na Tae-Joo *Pulkkot* Literary House (나태주풀꽃문학관). Could you tell us more about this place?

The Na Tae-Joo *Pulkkot* Literary House originally opened in 2014, when the city of Gongju purchased a Japanese-style house built during the colonial era located at the foot of Bonghwang Mountain in the old downtown area, and named it Gongju *Pulkkot* Literary House (공주풀꽃문학관). For the next ten years, it served as a model example for Gongju's urban regeneration project in the old city center. In recognition of this, the city decided it was appropriate to pursue the construction of a new literary house. A proposal was submitted to the central government, and the site was officially selected for the literary museum project.

With funding from Chungcheongnam-do supplemented by contributions from Gongju-si, amounting to approximately KRW 8 billion -



Source: Official website of Na Tae-Joo *Pulkkot* Literary House

a new 300-*pyeong* (roughly 1,000 square meters) building for the literary house was built, opening on July 29, 2025. Whereas most literary museums are organized in the form of memorial halls and exhibition centers, our literary house aims to move away from that model. Instead, we envisioned it as a space for experience, rest, and learning, and we worked to structure the interior facilities accordingly.

In 2023, you published *I Wanted to See You Longer* (Doublebook Publishing), the first “comic poetry collection” in Korea. Since then, you have released two more, *Loving the Star* (Doublebook Publishing) and *Welcome, Happiness* (Doublebook Publishing). You seem open to new concepts and challenges to introduce readers to the charm of poetry. Do you have any new projects coming up?

The comic poetry collection was born of a suggestion from students during a lecture I gave at a middle school. They pointed out that while novels and history books were often adapted into comic-book form for easier reading, poetry collections never were, and complained about it. Hearing that, I thought, “They are right. I should publish a comic poetry book.” So, I proposed the idea to my publisher, and Korea’s first comic poetry collection was born. Since then, I have released various types of poetry collections, including an “AI appreciation-based poetry collection,” a “puzzle-based poetry collection,” and a “scent-based poetry collection.” I am currently preparing new projects as well, such as a “Na Tae-Joo

Poetry Songbook” and a “Na Tae-Joo Poetry Pop-Up Book,” which I have proposed to my publisher.



*I Wanted to See You Longer; Loving the Star; Welcome, Happiness*

Your poems offer comfort, encouragement, and gentle cheer drawn from small moments in everyday life and from nature. That may be why so many readers love your works. What is the secret to sustaining such a warm heart toward others? And, why do you think we should read poetry?

To put it simply, I think it comes with age. In youth, people are inclined to be self-centered and individualistic -that is, after all, part of the nature of being alive. But as one grows older and lives through the years, one needs to move beyond a life that loves and cares only for oneself, and instead begin to live with consideration for others, to see things objectively, and to make room for others’ lives. When writing poetry, I believe an old poet must not fill poems only with his own grievances, confessions, or lamentations. He should also take in those of others and translate

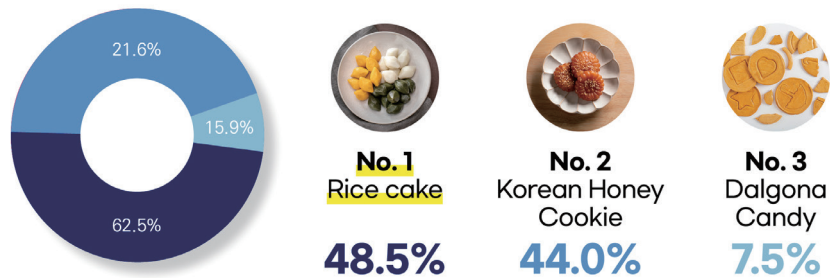
them into his own language. When that happens, a virtuous cycle occurs within the poem. What belongs to the poet becomes the reader's, and what belongs to the reader becomes the poet's - an astonishing exchange. A poet must lower himself before poetry and before its readers. He must consider the reader's position fully and sincerely. Only then can he reach a state where the universe and the self become one (宇我一體), where the self and the other become one (彼我一體). In other words, a poet needs the ability to take the reader's anguish, sorrow, weariness, depression, and anxiety and make them his own.

The reason why humans should read poetry is simple: we need to receive strength for our lives and to gain something meaningful for our own existence. Human beings are emotional creatures before they are rational ones. It is only natural, then, that we should read poetry, which speaks directly to emotion. It is, in the end, "reading poetry to survive." And so poets, too, must write poems that help today's readers endure and live on. Otherwise, readers will never stay close to poetry. I ask this of my own poems: "Oh poem that once kept me alive - go far, far into the world, and save even those readers I have never met."

## IMAGE OF K-BOOK

A Confession Told Through *Tteok*

## Q. What is Korea's signature dessert?



*Tteok* (떡; rice cake), which topped the latest *K-Book Trends* survey as Korea's No. 1 signature dessert, is a traditional Korean food made by steaming and pounding grains such as *mepssal* (멥쌀; non-glutinous rice) or *chapssal* (찰쌀; glutinous rice) into powder and shaping it by hand. *Tteok* is not only served during major celebrations such as national holidays, birthdays, weddings, and ancestral rites, but is also enjoyed casually by many Koreans in daily life. There is a wide variety of *tteok* in Korea - from *mujigae-tteok* (무지개떡; rainbow-colored *tteok*), *siru-tteok* (시루떡; layered *tteok* topped with red beans), *injeolmi* (인절미; sticky *tteok* coated with soybean powder), and *susupat-tteok* (수수팥떡; red-bean-

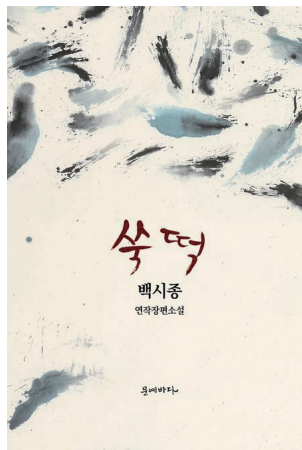


Korea's signature dessert, *tteok*

coated sorghum *tteok*), to *omegi-tteok* (오메기떡; sweet-millet *tteok* rolled in bean powder, especially enjoyed on Jeju Island). Their shapes, flavors, and meanings are just as diverse.

The white, long *garae-tteok* (가래떡; cylindrical *tteok* made with non-glutinous rice flour) symbolizes purity and longevity, just like its clean color and long shape. So, on *Seollal* (설날; Lunar New Year's Day), people eat *tteokguk* (떡국; soup made with sliced *garae-tteok*) to greet the new year with a clean heart and wish for good health. When a baby turns one hundred days old, families share white *baekseolgi* (백설기; white, usually box-shaped steamed *tteok*) with their neighbors, as it represents purity and a wish for a long, healthy life. During *Chuseok* (추석; Korean Thanksgiving), people enjoy *songpyeon* (송편; half-moon-shaped *tteok* filled with

sesame, red beans, or other ingredients and steamed over pine needles) to celebrate the harvest and express gratitude to their ancestors. Also, on *suneung* (수능; the College Scholastic Ability Test) day, *chapssal-tteok* is shared as a token of luck, wishing students' answers will come together perfectly - just as glutinous rice holds firmly together. Beyond desserts, *tteok* also appears in iconic dishes such as *tteokbokki*, a global K-food favorite. It's no surprise, then, that *tteok* was chosen as the No. 1 Korea's signature dessert.



*Ssug-tteok*

This month's issue introduces *Ssug-tteok* (Moonyebada) by Baek Si-Jong. The book is a collection of seven interconnected short stories inspired by the author's life spanning over eighty years. The author calls the work a kind of "confession told through food," reflecting on his past. In the post-war years of poverty, hunger blinded the protagonist and a boy named "Sunam" to everything but food. For them, eating was survival itself - they cast aside

manners and morality in what the author calls “acts done for the sake of eating.” Through foods like *ssug-tteok* (mugwort tteok), he reveals his memories of shame, survival, and yearning. Here, *tteok* is more than just a food - it is a symbol of memory and wounds, a bridge to family ties, survival, and social standing. As the protagonist grows older, the scent of *ssug-tteok* recalls the struggles of his youth and becomes a bittersweet confession of remorse.

Along with the title story *Ssug-tteok*, this full-length novel presents a series of food-themed stories centered on dishes such as *samgye-tang* (삼계탕; ginseng chicken soup), barley rice, margarine soy-sauce *bibimbap*, and soybean-paste perilla leaves - each reflecting the flavors and spirit of its era. Each story feels like an independent tale, yet as a whole, the book is like a coming-of-age novel that depicts a person’s life. Perhaps it is the author’s own journal of growth, saying that the foods once stolen, picked up from the ground, and taken away for survival in childhood are now tasted, enjoyed, and remembered with nostalgia.

» [Go to the voting event for the next issue](#)

## LET'S TRY

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# A Tiny World of Nature Inside a Glass Jar: Terrariums

### Event

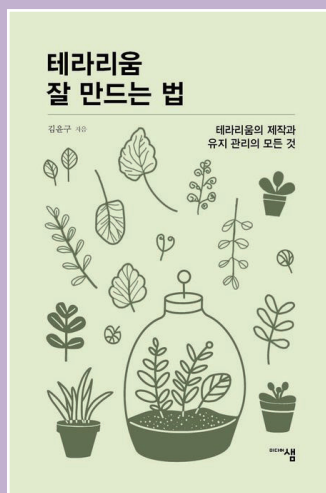
Let's Try introduces various useful, books  
published in Korea every month.

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!

### *How to Make a Good Terrarium*

– Written by Kim Yoon-Gu, illustrated by Apisto, published by Media SAM



Bring nature into your hands,  
and grow a little ecosystem inside a jar!

The word “terrarium” comes from the Latin words “*terra*” (earth) and “*arium*” (container or space), meaning “a space that holds the earth.” The terrarium is known to have originated in 19th-century London. At that time, severe air pollution caused by industrialization made it difficult to grow plants indoors, but when a fern spore was accidentally discovered thriving inside a sealed glass jar, it led to the development of the modern terrarium we know today. As urbanization progressed around the world, interest in plants that help reduce fine dust increased, and terrariums -

덕충은 식물을 식재하는 부분으로, 식물이 건강하게 뿌리를 내릴 수 있도록 도와준다.

**물 빠짐에 꼭 필요한 배수층**  
테라리움을 만들 때 가장 먼저 할 일은 저면에 배수층을 만드는 일이다. 배수층의 원리는 정수기 필터와 비슷하다. 딱히 꼭 요열된 물이 큰 입자와 작은 입자를 거치면서 맑게 정화되는 것과 같다. 배수층을 쌓는 것도 이와 비슷하다. 배수층에 들어가는 재료인 배수재는 자연 소재의 인공 소재가 있다. 자연 소재에는 흡착력이 강한 숯활성탄, 난석, 화산석과 같은 재료 등이 있으며, 인공 소재에는 가볍고 배수성이 좋은 폴리스티렌 폼이 있다.

**배수재의 종류**  
**자연 소재** 일반적으로 숯활성탄, 난석, 화산석, 마사토, 모래 등이 쓰인다. 숯활성탄은 분무 후에 고인 물의 탁도를 감소시키고 불순물을 흡착하여 물을 정화하며, 테라리움 내부에서 발생하는 부패물의 냄새를 잡아주는 공기를 깨끗하게 유지하는 데도 도움을 준다. 또한 곰팡이와 같은 질병을 예방하는 장점이 있다.  
난석과 화산석, 마사토는 모두 더큰 질감과 색깔을 갖고

배수층  
식물을 식재하기 위한 층

지면  
배수재의 하단부

배수층을 구성하는 배수층과 바닥층

물지만 견수태와 생밀도를 5:5 비율로 배합하여 붙이면 통기성도 좋아진다. 그 위에 이끼를 얹어 손으로 꼭꼭 누른 후 분재철사를 U자 모양으로 구부려 꽃이 고정시킨다. 땅글식물의 경우에는 공기뿌리가 밀착할 수 있도록 U자 분재철사를 찾는 것이 중요하다.

**땅글식물에 좋은 지면 식재**  
땅글식물을 식재할 때는 반드시 벽면에 바로 붙이지 말고, 뿌리 부분을 저면에 밀착하여 심어야 한다. 이끼와 마찬가지로 분재철사를 U자 모양으로 구부려 밀착한다. 땅글식물을 벽면에 바로 붙이면 당장 풍성해보일지 몰라도, 자리를 잡는 데 시간이 오래 걸릴 뿐 아니라, 경우에 따라 식물이나 죽을 수도 있다.  
땅글식물을 벽면에 식재하는 가장 좋은 방법은 식물을 별도로 유양하여 아랫부분의 뿌리를 충분히 받아낸 뒤 테라리움에 옮겨 심는 것이다. 만약 여의치 않다면 줄기에서 나온 공기뿌리를 저면에 밀착하여 심고, 충분히 뿌리를 내린 뒤 벽면을 타고 오르도록 유도한다.

**자유로운 식물 배치에는 풀분 식재**  
자유롭게 식물을 배치하려면 풀분(플러시) 기반 식재법을 할

풀분 식재  
자유로운 식물 배치가 가능하다.

상형분 식재  
이끼를 잘 섞은 채 유용하다. 이끼는 U자형 분재철사로 밀착한다.

지면 식재  
땅글식물은 식재할 때 뿌리 사이를 채워준다.

벽면식물의 다양한 식재법

an easy way to grow plants indoors - came to symbolize “nature within the city.” They have since gained popularity as ecological learning materials for children and as interior or hobby items for adults. Beyond plants alone, there are also various types, such as vivariums, which house insects and reptiles together, and paludariums, which create semi-aquatic environments that blend land and water.

The book featured in this month’s issue, *How to Make a Good Terrarium*, introduces everything from the history and principles of terrariums to various types such as glass-jar terrariums, cube terrariums, and paludariums, along with proper maintenance methods. The author, a terrarium artist who runs the YouTube channel “GuGarden (구의정원),” shares the joy of communicating with nature by cultivating personal miniature gardens with his own hands. In this book, he generously offers knowledge on essential materials for making terrariums, methods for arranging plants, ways to eliminate pests and mold, and, further, tips for keeping plants healthy and thriving. One of the book’s strengths is that it provides explanations accompanied by detailed illustrations, helping anyone to easily understand and follow along. Experience the infinite vitality of greenery within a small glass jar, through *How to Make a Good Terrarium*! It will serve as a helpful guide not only for plant enthusiasts, but also for those interested in creating vivariums or paludariums.

## I Read

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# *We Do Not Part* by Han Kang

The Scream of Silence: *We Do Not Part*

Written by Günsenin Miray Dirlik (Reader of *K-Book Trends*)

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Han Kang's novel *We Do Not Part* (Munhakdongne Publishing) recounts the Jeju Massacre, which took place on Jeju Island in South Korea in 1948 and claimed the lives of thousands of people. This event remained buried in silence for many years. The author conveys this historical weight not through numbers and statistics, but through the intertwined stories of three women. Thus, the events are not merely information, but are etched into my mind through an emotional connection.

A book that begins with a dream leaves me with a heaviness in my chest and a knot in my throat from the very first pages. Those familiar feelings I encountered in *The White Book* and *Human Acts* envelop me once again. This time, before me are a mother who has fallen silent after losing her son, the writer Gyongha, who



The Korean and English editions of *We Do Not Part*

is trying to confront her own past, and the photographer Inson, who is tracing the losses in Jeju. Women with different voices, each carrying the same burden. Looking at them, I see loss, motherhood, and helplessness.

The narrative is both calm and jarring; at times an impartial observation, at others as quiet as a whisper... Yet within this silence, screams are hidden. Han Kang conveys the depth of pain through silence. At that moment, I realise that this story is not just about an event that took place in South Korea, but about all the silenced and forgotten things in the world. Because wars, massacres, and collective suffering are often made invisible under the pretext of “social harmony”. A veil of oblivion is drawn over them. It reminds me of snow, white and serene on the surface, but concealing frozen earth, buried stories, and heavy silence beneath. What will remain when the snow melts?

Throughout the book, I see once again what interests and political

power can do, regardless of geography or history. That is why I feel I must listen not only to the past of a single country, but also to the silences across different periods and geographies. From the silence of Jeju, I come to the silences on our own soil. Untold stories emerge in my mind. At this point, the book strikes me like an elegy. I think that sometimes not saying goodbye means striving not to leave things behind, and sometimes striving not to forget.

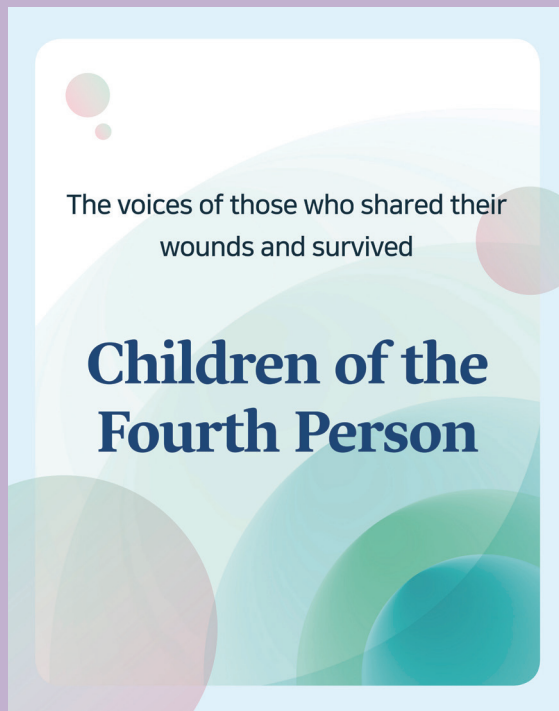
When I finish the book, I realise that life sometimes unfolds before us like a blank page, and we colour that page with our memories. The result isn't always a beautiful landscape; sometimes frozen memories and broken scenes remain. I ask myself: Do we truly heal by remembering, or do we grow stronger by forgetting?


## NEW BOOKS

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Learning the aesthetics of reflection from Korean gardens

### **Korean Gardens by Your Side**

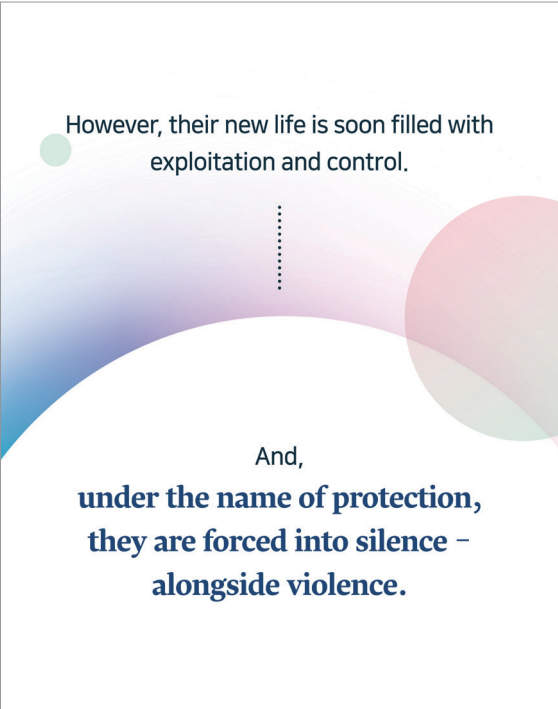




A foundation promised safety  
and comfort to children in  
need of care -

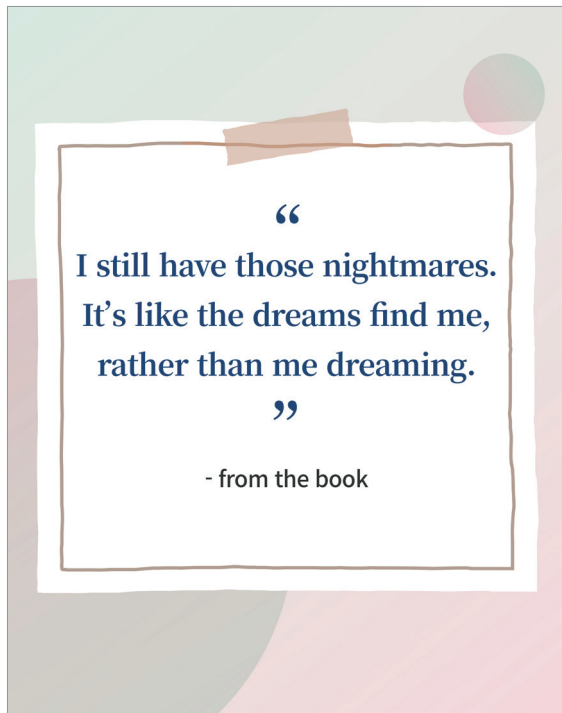
**the “Happy Children’s Welfare  
Foundation”**

And, among them are two  
children from P-eup,  
**“Gwangji” and “Aurora,”**  
who arrive in search of help.



However, their new life is soon filled with  
exploitation and control.

And,  
**under the name of protection,  
they are forced into silence –  
alongside violence.**



To record a collective pain that cannot be expressed through "I," "you," or "he/she," the author adopts a new point of view - the "fourth person" - to bear witness to each other's voices.

**A story that exposes the shadows of human-made goodwill and structures.**  
**A story where the cries of silenced children echo through every letter.**

**Winner of the 15th Honbul Literary Award**



**Children of the Fourth Person**  
Written by Kim Ana,  
published by Dasan Contents Group

**BEST SELLERS**

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**Moving Into the Final Stretch  
of 2025**

**Bestseller Trends in the Three Biggest Online Bookstores in Korea for the 2nd week of November, 2025**

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As November set in, temperatures began to drop abruptly, and daily swings became sharper. However, it isn't the weather alone that signals winter's approach. Bookstores began displaying Christmas ornaments and calendars for 2026, with next year's planners quietly reminding readers that the end of 2025 is just around the corner. Around this time of year, bookstores always take on a distinctly wintery, year-end atmosphere.


This shift was equally evident in the bestseller lists. Literature, which had long dominated the rankings, has retreated, while books forecasting trends for 2026 - already strong in October - continue to gain momentum. Riding the unusual boom in the Korean stock market, investment titles such as *PS4's Meta-Cognition Investing Method* and *Trend Following with Large-Caps* also climbed quickly. Amid these changes, the title that stood out most was *Quantum Mechanics: A First Look*, which rose straight to No.

1. Written by Professor Chae Eun-Mi, one of Korea's leading authorities on quantum computing, the book breaks down the fundamentals of quantum mechanics and recent research findings in an accessible way. Meanwhile, in fiction, readers are enthusiastically welcoming *The Last Will of Astham*, the long-awaited new novel by Lee Young-Do, Korea's foremost fantasy writer with growing international recognition. His first full-length novel in seven years, the story begins with the murder of popular author "Astham Row," who, despite being killed, remains alive for four years, writing a "message before death" (*imsajeon-eon*, 臨死傳言) to reveal his killer. Blending fantasy, mystery, and metafiction, the novel's premise has generated significant buzz.


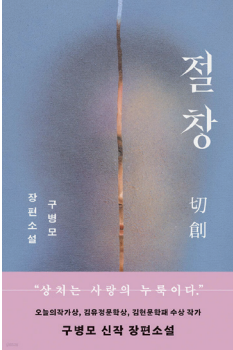


The non-fiction category this month revolved around a single theme: "adulthood." Former Constitutional Court Justice Moon Hyung-Bae's *About Goodwill*, which also appeared in the documentary *Adult Kim Jang-Ha*; Taesoo's long-standing bestseller *Adult Happiness is Quiet*; and *Dignity of Adults*, which has remained on the charts since its release in October - all suggest that many readers are reflecting deeply on what it means to be an adult today. Also, in the sports category, *Your Time Will Come* by Yeom Kyoung-Youb, the manager who led the LG Twins to consecutive Korean Series championships in 2023 and 2024, debuted at No. 4 immediately after publication. The book captures his strategies, philosophy, and baseball life - unique insights from someone who has won championships as a player, general manager, and

coach. Meanwhile, *Live Your Life Caring for Yourself* by poet Na Tae-Joo compiles the lines and reflections that have resonated with audiences during his many lectures. True to its title, the book conveys the poet's heartwarming hope that people will live with greater love and respect for themselves. As the final month of 2025 approaches, the bookstore shelves reflect a season filled with warmth, introspection, and quiet wishes for a gentle, hopeful new year in 2026.


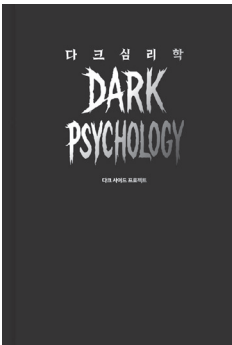
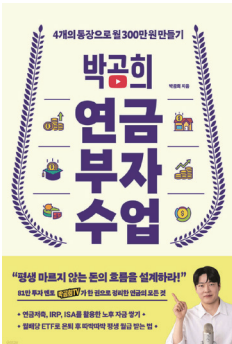

\* The rank of bestsellers below was organized after integrating domestic bestsellers in the second week of November from the three biggest online bookstores in Korea – Kyobo Book Centre, Aladin, and Yes 24.

Top 10 bestsellers for the 2nd week of November		
1		<p><b><u>Quantum Mechanics: A First Look</u></b></p> <p>Author   Chae Eun-Mi            Publisher   Book Pleasure            Genre   Science</p>
1		<p><b><u>Trend Korea 2026</u></b></p> <p>Author   Kim Nan-Do and 11 others            Publisher   Mirae Books            Genre   Business</p>

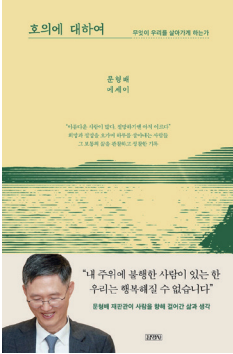


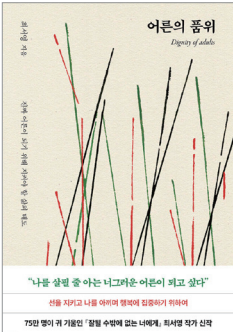
Top 10 bestsellers for the 2nd week of November

<p>3</p>		<p><i><u>Trend Following with Large-Caps</u></i></p> <p>Author   Lee Jong-Ho (Jeonhwang)          Publisher   Sapientes          Genre   Business</p>
<p>4</p>		<p><i><u>Cutting Wound</u></i></p> <p>Author   Koo Byung-Mo          Publisher   Munhakhdongne Publishing          Genre   Fiction</p>
<p>5</p>		<p><i><u>PS4's Meta-Cognition Investing Method</u></i></p> <p>Author   PS4 (Kim Dong-Ho)          Publisher   The Korea Economic Daily          Genre   Business</p>
<p>5</p>		<p><i><u>The Last Will of Astham</u></i></p> <p>Author   Lee Young-Do          Publisher   Goldenbough Books          Genre   Fiction</p>

Top 10 bestsellers for the 2nd week of November

7		<p><b><u>Übermensch</u></b></p> <p>Author   Friedrich Nietzsche          Publisher   Rise Books          Genre   Philosophy</p>
8		<p><b><u>Dark Psychology</u></b></p> <p>Author   Dark Side Project          Publisher   Ascending          Genre   Psychology</p>
9		<p><b><u>Park Gom-Hee's Lesson on Getting Rich on Annuities</u></b></p> <p>Author   Park Gom-Hee          Publisher   Influential          Genre   Business</p>
10		<p><b><u>Money Trend 2026</u></b></p> <p>Author   Kim Do-Yoon and 7 others          Publisher   Book Moment          Genre   Business</p>

Top 5 non-fiction for the 2nd week of November

<p>1</p>		<p><b><u>About Goodwill</u></b></p> <p>Author   Moon Hyung-Bae          Publisher   Gimm-young Publishing</p>
<p>2</p>		<p><b><u>Don't Let Your Moods Become Your Attitude</u></b></p> <p>Author   Lemon Psychology          Publisher   Galleon</p>
<p>3</p>		<p><b><u>Adult Happiness is Quiet</u></b></p> <p>Author   Taesoo          Publisher   Page 2 Books</p>
<p>4</p>		<p><b><u>Dignity of Adults</u></b></p> <p>Author   Choi Seo-Young          Publisher   Book Romance</p>

Top 5 non-fiction for the 2nd week of November

<p>4</p>		<p><b><i><u>Your Time Will Come</u></i></b></p> <p>Author   Yeom Kyoung-Youb          Publisher   Woongjin Jisik House</p>
<p>4</p>		<p><b><i><u>Live Your Life Caring for Yourself</u></i></b></p> <p>Author   Na Tae-Joo          Publisher   Doublebook Publishing</p>

#K-BOOK

#Secret

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

*That Night*

## 1. Publication Details

**Title** | That Night

**Author** | Cha jeongyun

**Publisher** | HYEONAMSA PUBLISHING Co., Ltd.

**Publication Date** | 2023-08-20

**ISBN** | 9788932375953

**No. of pages** | 36

**Dimensions** | 210×253

## 2. Book Intro

Everyone is deep asleep, but a boy wakes up to a wet sensation in his blanket. He just had a dream where he was looking at a fountain, but why is his blanket wet? He hopes it's not true, but alas, there is a yellowish wet mark on his blanket. It is so quiet during the night that even the dripping faucet sounds thunderous. The boy is trying to hold up the blanket in his arms but doesn't have a clue about what to do. Should he try to wash it? But it's way too big to fit into the basin. Should he hide it under the desk? It's too big to be stuffed all the way in. He frantically tries to find a solution when he gets a great idea...



In a gentle way, the book captures the details of a happening that many readers can probably relate to.

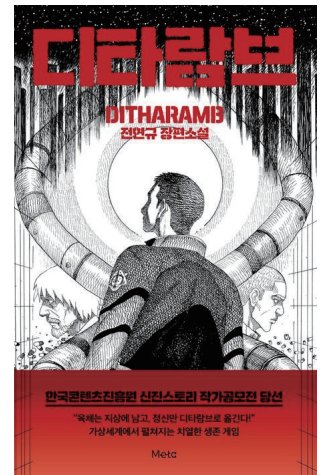
The dark and light are expressed in simplified colors and detail fills every scene. If you pay close attention, you notice that light appears every time the boy gets close to a solution. The trivial symbols that the author has hidden in the small illustrations on the sidelines of the story, the shape of the shadows whenever light appears, and the vague pattern on the boy's pajamas bring even more life to the story. The boy heads to the kitchen with his final idea but finds that someone has been watching him. Will the boy be able to successfully cover up his mishap?

[See more details >>](#)

## *DITHARAMB*

### 1. Publication Details

**Title** | DITHARAMB  
**Author** | Jeon Hyeon-kyu  
**Publisher** | GOZKNOCK ENT  
**Publication Date** | 2023-04-30  
**ISBN** | 9791163168621  
**No. of pages** | 304  
**Dimensions** | 130×200



### 2. Book Intro

#### **\* The mechanic ark to save humankind \*\***

In the near future, humans face a severe food shortage due to climate change and powerlessly wait for their demise. One day, a visionary developer creates a perfect virtual world called Ditharamb. In response to the pressing issue of food shortages, humanity initiated Project Ditharamb, a groundbreaking initiative that aims to address the problem by preserving the body and transferring the mind to Ditharamb. The project is designed to provide a temporary solution while scientists figure out a solution to climate change.

#### **\* A fierce battle in paradise \*\***

Minhyeok's access to Ditharamb is disapproved. He attempts to steal food with his coworker and gets caught by his boss, who suggests that he will not raise any issues on one condition. Minhyeok has no option but to break into Ditharamb

despite the consequences. In the virtual universe, where all communications with the outside world have been severed, Minhyeok is captured by a number of men and is forced to play the horrible game of “kill or die” in the middle of an amphitheater.

**\* Something’s definitely wrong with this world \*\***

Minhyeok manages to survive and escape Ditharamb. But what he saw and experienced continued to torture him. So, he attempts to pull people out of the world in order to help them and learn more about it, using his body as the medium. Unlike the light beginning, the more he proceeds with his plan, and the more he learns about Ditharamb, the more he realizes that something’s definitely wrong with the seemingly perfect world.

[See more details >>](#)

## *A Glistening Shadow*

### 1. Publication Details

**Title** | A Glistening Shadow

**Author** | Lee Yoonhee, Hwang Sunmi

**Publisher** | SIGONGJUNIOR

**Publication Date** | 2021-10-05

**ISBN** | 9791165796914

**No. of pages** | 140

**Dimensions** | 150×210



### 2. Book Intro

Jang Bitnara hits it off with the friends she has made in her new school. The three musketeers, Bitnara, Eunjae and Yuri, share a secret journal along with the innermost details of their lives and build their special friendship. Bitnara is determined to continue this special relationship for a very long time. But one day, she gets a school assignment where she has to research her conception dream—a dream that a mother or close relative usually has about her baby before it is born. Since Bitnara was adopted, she does not know what her conception dream is, and is nervous that her secret might get out. She had been bullied in her previous school when the other kids had found out that she was adopted, which was why she had transferred to the current school. Eventually, Bitnara makes up her conception dream. But the day the students are to give the presentation, a new kid appears—

Heo Yun. For some reason, when Bitnara looks at Heo Yun, she is reminded of her days at the orphanage, memories which she had kept tightly locked away. Heo Yun causes cracks in the relationship of the three musketeers and threatens Bitnara's world. Will Bitnara be able to keep her secret and her friendship?

[See more details >>](#)

## *The Secret Is In The Ice Cream Flavor*

### 1. Publication Details

**Title** | The Secret Is In The Ice Cream Flavor

**Author** | Gang Eunok, Jeon Jayun

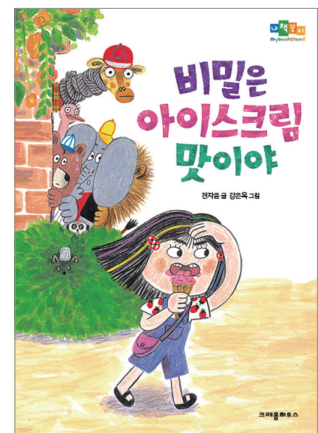
**Publisher** | CrayonHouse Co., Ltd.

**Publication Date** | 2021-07-20

**ISBN** | 9788955478075

**No. of pages** | 88

**Dimensions** | 150×210



### 2. Book Intro

#### Lovely Arin and the animals

Arin is a cute and bubbly girl who just lost her front teeth, loves ice cream and the little detective Dodo.

#### The world through the pure eyes of a child

What would it be like if animals were working all around us? When Arin starts to go after a bear that is working as a package deliverer, she soon encounters a giraffe that works in a convenience store, an elephant working in a park, and an ostrich that is a ballet teacher. Through the eyes of an adult they are just a delivery person who looks like a bear, a part-time worker with a long neck like a giraffe, and a park maintenance worker with a large build. But there is no fooling Arin. The animals don't want their cover to be exposed so they try to get rid of Arin, but she is determined. As you read, imagine why you think the animals had to work. Readers will find themselves immediately pulled into the story.

#### Caring for each other

The reader will be able to feel the love that Mom and Dad has for Arin, the love that Arin has for her parents, the love that the animals have for the old man,

and the love that the old man has for the animals. All this love comes together, troubles subside and it becomes a sweet and peaceful afternoon once again. Love has a sweet way of covering all mistakes and misunderstandings like cool ice cream on a hot summer day. What is your secret? Perhaps it's a secret to protect someone?

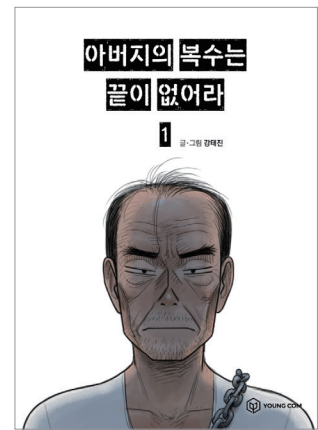
Many animals are neglected and abused, but many people try their best to protect and love animals. The author hopes for a world where humans and animals live in harmony, just like the old man and the animals in the story.

[See more details >>](#)

## *Relentless Vengeance*

### 1. Publication Details

Title | Relentless Vengeance  
Author | Kang Taejin  
Publisher | YOUNG COM Co.,Ltd  
Publication Date | 2020-11-26  
ISBN | 9791190153553  
No. of pages | 304  
Dimensions | 145×200



### 2. Book Intro

Maeng Do-hun, who loses everything following a failed business and real estate fraud, earns a meager income working part-time job at a convenience store. One day, he is informed of his grandmother's deteriorating dementia and returns to his hometown. After placing her in a nursing home, Maeng discovers a mysterious underground room at her house. There, he finds the body of his father, who suddenly went missing 30 years ago.

[See more details >>](#)

## *Som Crush*

### 1. Publication Details

**Title** | Som Crush

**Author** | Heo Jinhee

**Publisher** | Munhakdongne

**Publication Date** | 2020-01-23

**ISBN** | 9788954670302

**No. of pages** | 232

**Dimensions** | 140×205



### 2. Book Intro

**“I wanted to be courageous. After all, it’s Som.”**

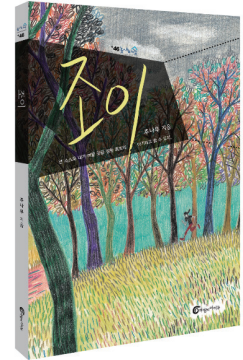
Grand Prize winner of the 10th Munhakdongne Young Adult Literary Award. A story about having the courage to take one step closer to the truth and stand by someone. This book makes readers reflect on whether we draw hasty conclusions too easily based only on first impressions or rumors and give up the opportunity to learn about a person. In this novel told more in the vein of a theatrical production than that of a book, the characters in the roles of the detective, witch, and queen walk on a carefully constructed stage, and as the mystery builds, it’s impossible to tell how the story will unravel. Naturally, there is one character who commands attention beyond the barrier of rumors and prejudice. Above all else, this novel tells readers that it’s okay to fall for anyone, and if we do, we should try to get closer. Because when we take that chance, perhaps we’ll experience the magic of making that special, secret friend.

[See more details >>](#)

## Joy

### 1. Publication Details

Title | Joy  
Author | Kim Yoonju, Joo Namoo  
Publisher | Baram Books  
Publication Date | 2019-07-25  
ISBN | 9791162100387  
No. of pages | 180  
Dimensions | 148×210



### 2. Book Intro

**“What does it feel to have someone who looks like me?”**

**The story of 12-year-old Joy finding her identity**

Sister Teresa of Bethel Convent finds Joy in an apple box and decides to raise her at the convent. Joy grows up to be a healthy and spirited child, learning a lot from the sisters! She has so much to say that she sometimes bothers the nuns, but with a positive and warm heart, she entertains people all the time. However, when Eunchoe, who is at same age of Joy, joins the convent, Joy starts to feel curious about her birth mother.

“What does it feel to have someone who looks like me? Does the mother who gave birth to me have long, double eyelids like me? If my mother sees me, will she recognize me at a glance?” (page 168)

Joy’s imagining her parents’ face is an act of looking into herself. “I am thinner than other people and I run well, so my parents would be the same.” Joy has just remembered her parents, whom she knows nothing about, and as a result, she is looking at herself in every corner. Furthermore, she accepts and affirms herself as she is. Recognizing and loving yourself is harder than you think. Joy portrays the process of finding one’s true identity and gaining faith in oneself in a witty and cheerful style. Hopefully, Joy’s dazzling courage and pleasure will come across to the readers of this book.

[See more details >>](#)

## *Corbusier, Are You Happy Today?*

### 1. Publication Details

**Title** | Corbusier, Are You Happy Today?

**Author** | AeLe Family

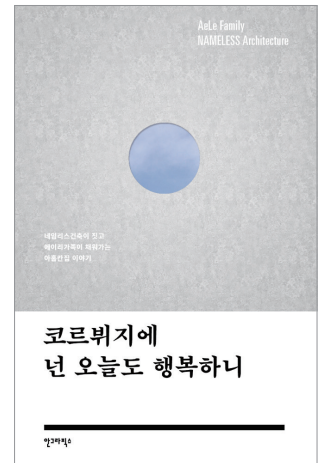
**Publisher** | Ahn Graphics

**Publication Date** | 2019-07-04

**ISBN** | 9788970590202

**No. of pages** | 272

**Dimensions** | 138×208



### 2. Book Intro

What does the Sun do when it rains? The Sun enjoys fishing stars with a frog in the galaxy and plays hide-and-seek in a sunflower garden. The Sun also enjoys hot swimming in a volcano where lava flows and has a party with friends. The Sun does quite a lot of things during its free time until the rain stops. Let's enjoy the Sun's special vacation together!

[See more details >>](#)

## *Baby Polar Bear Goes out Into the World*

### 1. Publication Details

**Title** | Baby Polar Bear Goes out Into the World

**Author** | Kim Hyewon

**Publisher** | GORAEBAETSOK

**Publication Date** | 2017-02-06

**ISBN** | 9788992505635

**No. of pages** | 36

**Dimensions** | 210×250



### 2. Book Intro

The baby polar bear is born in a place full of ice. Despite mother polar bear's stern warning to never leave the cave alone, baby polar bear, ever curious about the outside world, leaves one day while mother polar bear is out looking for food. After following a cold, salty scent, the baby polar bear finds himself lost in an unfamiliar

place. Now all by himself, he slowly falls asleep while counting the stars in the night sky. Then he meets a little girl who recognizes the loneliness he is feeling.

*Baby Polar Bear Goes out Into the World* depicts the encounters and journey of the baby polar bear and the little girl while telling a story about forming relationships with things around the world. Forming a relationship and sharing emotions with each other, with a shared interest in one another, means that the other is a special being like nothing else in this world. When the little girl in the story calls out, “Hey, baby bear!” the polar bear doll, just one of many dolls inside the toy store, becomes a special baby polar bear, and the little girl also becomes the only little girl out of many girls.

After reading this book, the reader will be reminded of encounters with things we are related to that endlessly interact even though they appear to be indifferent to one another. By listening to their stories, readers will be able to feel what is precious to us who are nearby.

[See more details >>](#)

## *The Twelfth Country*

### 1. Publication Details

**Title** | The Twelfth Country

**Author** | Kim HyeJin, Kim HyeJin

**Publisher** | Baram Books

**Publication Date** | 2013-04-25

**ISBN** | 9788994475370

**No. of pages** | 468

**Dimensions** | 148×210



### 2. Book Intro

In the tenth year after the release of *Aro and the Perfect World*, and in the fifth year after the release of *No One's Colors*, the fourth book of the series, *The Twelfth Country*, has been released, and this one doesn't include the “Reader” from the *Incomplete World*. Moreover, unlike the first, second and third episodes, which go in chronological order, *The Twelfth Country* goes back farther than the first. If you thought that the three brothers and sisters were the main characters of the story of the *Complete World*, you would be confused. Readers who think

that moving from the real world to the fantasy world is exemplary of the “fantasy” genre may be in for a surprise. In short, *The Twelfth Country*, the fourth and latest story in the Complete World series, is great for fans of the series and new readers alike.

Reading the book, with over 500 pages and a combination of many subplots, may seem like daunting homework to children. However, children who have already read the previous three books have received this book with great interest. The size does not deter readers. In fact, it is all the more enthralling to read into the mystery surrounding the “Kingdom of Fire” (does it exist?), the suspicious conspiracy in an eerie and empty land, and the hidden and shameful history of the floating city and to see how they all form parts of a wheel. This is clearly a testament to the fact that *The Twelfth Country*, as fantasy, possesses literary value that exceeds the entertainment of video games and animation.

The stark spatial contrast between the floating city and the Kingdom of Fire, the anger of the socially weak and a tragic resolution, the irony that the ultimate solution always lies at the opposite end, and the common values such as friendship and respect shown by individual characters in the story, are some of the meaningful aspects of this book. However, the most important analysis is that this story is about a true adventure. An adventure is always about the journey, not the destination. This is also how the reader perceives this book. Immerse yourself and have fun while reading! This incredible “prequel” to the stories of the Complete World provides the backbone of the series while providing a satisfying literary experience for readers.

[See more details >>](#)