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K-Book Trends | 2026.05

The Whole World in K-Picture Book

K-BOOK TRENDS



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A New Vision Rooted in Tradition: The Evolution of Korean Picture Books

Written by

Kim Jieun

Kim Jieun | literary critic

Professor in the Department of Creative Writing at Seoul Institute of the Arts. Author of the essay collection *Children Go Far* and the critical essay collections *The Child*, *The Third Person* and *The Adult Who Lies*. Co-author of *Picture Books: Korean Artists and Such Gentle Picture Books*.

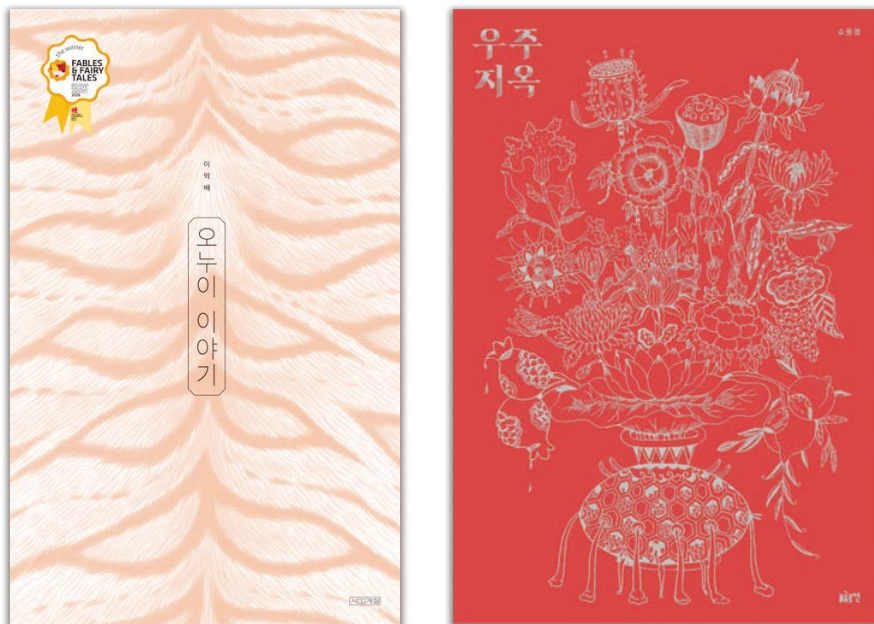
Who is searching for Korean picture books?

The Korean Pavilion at the 2026 Bologna Children's Book Fair was consistently bustling with publishing professionals from around the world. In addition to those visiting the booth for pre-scheduled copyright consultations, it was not uncommon for visitors to be drawn in by the on-site author talks or workshops and request a meeting on the spot. On the second day of the fair, at the Networking Day hosted by the Publication Industry Promotion Agency of Korea, participants were asked about the strengths of Korean picture books. They remarked that the books are not only delicate in their expression but also diverse in their thematic approaches, providing readers with a "challenging reading experience." This is a remarkable turnaround compared to the early 2000s, when Korean picture books had little presence, or even the early 2010s, when they were still primarily focused on importing copyrights despite beginning to produce award-winning works.

The spectrum of Korean picture books has expanded to the point where it is difficult to categorize them under a single label. Even at the Bologna Children's Book Fair, the names of Korean creators are visible across various categories, including the Illustrators Exhibition, the dPICTUS 100 Outstanding Picturebooks, and the Bologna Ragazzi Awards in Fiction, Non-Fiction, Comics, Crossmedia, and The Amazing Bookshelf. Amidst this growth, there is a vibrant experimentation with unique aesthetics. An increasing number of works strive for original beauty by recreating traditional book formats, such as folding screen (byeongpung) or scroll-style bindings, or by utilizing materials like hanji (traditional mulberry paper), ink, and silk, while carrying forward the techniques of traditional Korean color painting.

A positive reception of a work’s artistic achievement does not directly translate into copyright export performance. Synthesizing the experiences of Korean publishing professionals involved in copyright consultations, Bologna 2026 is evaluated as a year when the preference for so-called “uniquely Korean” elements slightly declined. Other countries are facing similar challenges, with unstable prices due to war and shrinking consumption leading to a difficult publishing climate. Consequently, picture book publishing has become more defensive. This year, in particular, it is reported that there were more export consultations for “universal” books capable of satisfying a broad range of readers.

Inherent Beauty: Reclaimed from the Past and Future



The Story of Brother and Sister, Cosmic Hell

Nevertheless, we examine several representative books imbued with our traditional techniques and unique beauty. *The Story of Brother and Sister* by Lee Uk-bae, which won the Grand Prize in the Bologna Ragazzi Award’s Fiction: Folktales & Fairy Tales category this year, is a picture book

created by reviving hanji paintings the author had kept for over 20 years since their initial creation. As the original paintings are quite large (65 cm in height) the book was produced in a significantly elongated rectangular format of 360 mm. The slender yet vibrant curves of the tiger's fur are remarkably dynamic. The harmony of colors is particularly striking, with various shades of green set against the mother's skirt and the blue of the sky to capture the rhythmic movement of the forest. *Cosmic Hell* by So Yun-Kyung, who drew significant attention for showcasing hyeokpil-hwa (leather-brush painting) during a Bologna workshop, is a picture book that transforms the concept of hell from Dante's *Divine Comedy* into Eastern imagery. It imagines thirteen hells relevant to our modern world, recreating their suffering through meticulous detail. The hells imagined by So are deeply intertwined with the climate crisis. The dazzling images, resembling a fusion of Siwangdo (Buddhist paintings of the Ten Kings of Hell) and cyberpunk, are simultaneously ecstatic and agonizing. The moment in the work where the gate of "Hell Star" opens with the resolute declaration, "There is no way back," poignantly reflects the urgency of our current reality.

Layering Imagination Over Precise Records

Shashamiu's Tamna Sullyeokdo: A Journey Through Jeju begins with an album of paintings left by Lee Hyeong-Sang, a magistrate of Jeju during the late Joseon Dynasty. Created 300 years ago by a man who took up a brush to examine every corner of the island long before the era of drones or satellites, the original Sullyeokdo has been reimagined through modern curiosity, infused with rich imagination and cheerful colors. In addition, Suzy Lee's *Inyeon* (Destiny) (White Rabbit Press, 2025) is a scroll-style

picture book inspired by Sim Sa-jeong's Jokjado (Hanging Scroll). The narrative design is particularly striking, structured so that it can be read from either direction. While keeping the ink brushwork light and ethereal, the book required a material that would not tear when the printed images were repeatedly rolled and unrolled. After much deliberation, the artist printed the book on Tyvek, which is a modern high-tech material that is both lightweight and incredibly durable. Thus, the scroll, which is a familiar prop from historical dramas, is reinterpreted as an ultralight yet sturdy “bundle of stories.”



Tamna Sullyeokdo: A Journey Through Jeju

Baek Ji-Hye, a picture book artist who carries forward the lineage of traditional Korean color painting, has been holding an exhibition titled “Greetings from Flowers” at Albus Gallery in Seoul since early April. This exhibition features the original paintings from her forthcoming picture book, *Twelve Months of the Garden* (Changbi). Baek’s color painting involves the baechae technique, where silk is stretched over a frame and coated with gyobansu (a sizing solution of glue and alum). Colors are then

layered from the back of the silk to create the profound depths of an object's existence. This traditional Korean technique, which is fading even among skilled practitioners, has been preserved through Baek's rigorous and disciplined approach as a chronicler. Her paintings of flowers and insects stand at the opposite pole of AI-generated art. Within her picture books lies a vitality that cannot be achieved simply by recording the shapes of flowers.

Efforts to revive ancient aesthetics through these diverse approaches continue today. This reflects not only a search for the identity of Korean picture books but also a deeper contemplation within children's literature to extract the romanticism of old tales through a modern sensibility. When these concerns are resolved with such finesse, I believe we will see the emergence of many Korean picture books that are profoundly meaningful and capable of being cherished by readers worldwide.

Korean Picture Books: Selected by Critics Across Generation

Written by

Sollim Lee, Junhyuk Maeng, Mihyang Kim, Dongseok Jang

Lee Sollim | Publishing Editor

As an editor, she contemplates books that will stand the test of time, while as a critic, she keeps a keen eye on new releases that demand to be read in the here and now. She is also a reader who dreams of a day where she can step aside from professional concerns to simply read to her heart's content, secretly hoping to one day find herself accidentally locked inside a library.

Junhyuk Maeng | Book Editor

Rather than aiming to craft a polished review or a perfect introduction, my true hope is to accurately convey the 'code' shared by myself and the 'us' out there somewhere. As a South Korean reader in my thirties who loves literature, I seek to carefully give voice to a part of that sensibility.

Mihyang Kim | Book Critic·Essayist, IT Service Planner

She worked as a publishing editor for thirteen years, spending three years on books and ten years planning and editing magazines. She is the author of the essay *Mother Said She Was Not Happy*, and co-authored *Key Words of the Korean Publishing Industry 2010-2019*, *What is Film?*, and *Goods Caution*. Having served as a Creative Director at a tech company, she is currently designing, interpreting, and recording the world as a service planner and storyteller.

Dongseok Jang | Literary Critic, Secretary General of the Pajubookcity Center

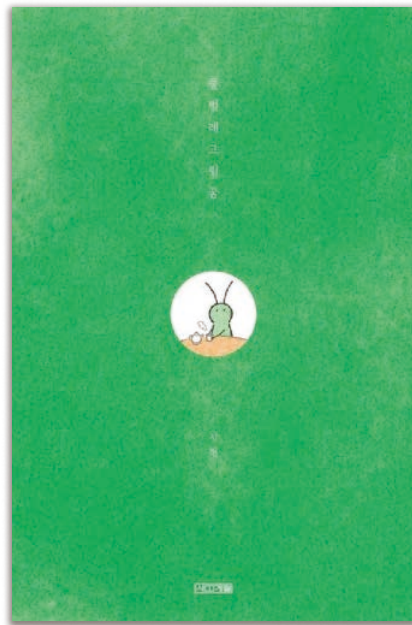
He is a dedicated reader and writer. Captivated by the vast and profound world of literature, he spends every spare moment reading and contemplating how books resonate with our society. He is currently striving to transform books, the infinite source of all content, into diverse cultural formats. His published works include *The Living Library*, *The Rebirth of Forbidden Books*, *The Birth of Different Thoughts*, *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms: A Story Renewed After a Thousand Years*, and *Meeting World Classics for the First Time: A Guide for Teens*.

In the May issue Special Project, critics from various generations each highlight a notable Korean picture book. This feature introduces a children's picture book about the misunderstandings that occur in communication, a book that explains complex emotions that are often difficult for children to grasp, and a title that addresses challenging situations that can be hard for a child to understand.

The 20s Perspective

Lee Sollim, Cultural Critic

“In the moments spent looking into the miniature house of the grass bug...”



Grass Bug Picture Dream

Grass Bug Picture Dream begins with a single small hole. Peering through the circular cutout in the center of the cover, one can see a grass bug sipping steaming tea. As the pages turn, an unexpected miniature world is revealed. The bug's home is as small as a fingernail, and the objects inside

are even smaller. Facing the first illustration, which occupies only a tiny fraction of the page, the reader naturally leans forward. Instead of magnifying this small world, the book draws the reader in by depicting it exactly as it is: tiny and intimate.

In this unique new release from Seo Hyun, an author who gained international acclaim after winning the Bologna Ragazzi Award in the Comics category, a green grass bug with long antennae dreams of becoming a human every day. A human body with only four limbs feels strange and uncomfortable. In one dream, while in human form, the character encounters its insect self inside a flowerpot. Within this gradually unfolding structure of overlapping dreams, distinguishing between what is real and what is a dream is not particularly important. As dreamlike and ethereal scenes unfold, the narrator exists simultaneously as both an insect and a human.

We often say that we must see the world more broadly and clearly. This book, however, moves in the opposite direction. It quietly focuses on the seemingly useless conversations between a tiny grass bug, which would easily go unnoticed in the human world, and his friend, a dung beetle. This approach reflects an affectionate gaze toward small and insignificant lives, much like the traditional Korean painting Chochungdo (Insects and Flowers) by Shin Saimdang, which served as the book's inspiration. The author explains that the story began while looking closely at a tiny house attached to a blade of grass in Chochungdo and imagining the creature living inside.

This static sensibility is also evident in the texture of the illustrations. Images completed with thin, delicate lines and softly settled colors make

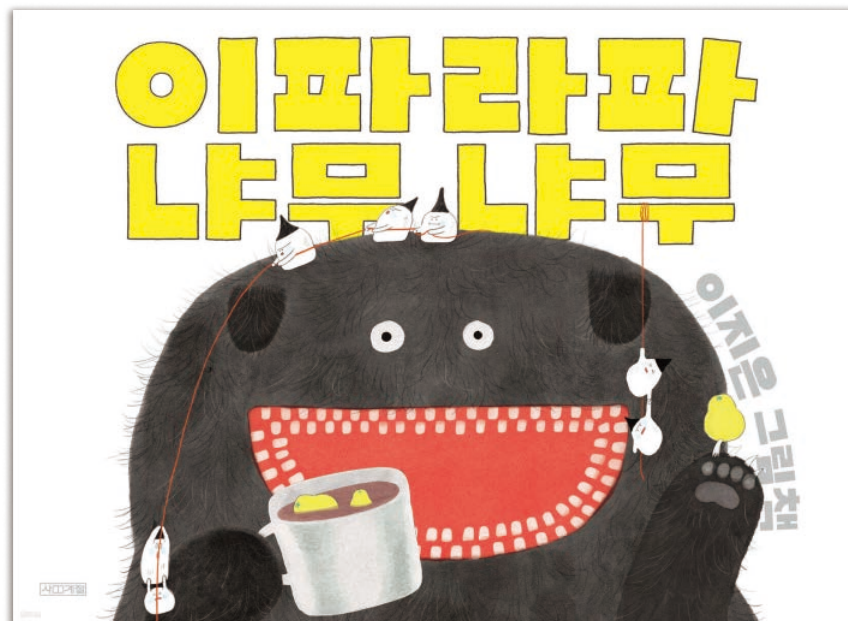
the act of turning each page a careful gesture. The scenes unfold peacefully, almost slowly. As a result, the reader does not just “see” the pictures but “peers into” them.

The back cover of *Grass Bug Picture Dream* features a small hole identical to the one at the beginning of the book. This time, we see the back of the grass bug walking quietly with an umbrella. His posture is the same as the human in the dream who claimed to have dreamed of becoming a bug. After passing through this mysterious repetition, one begins to reconsider which side of the story was the actual dream. While peering into the tiny house of the grass bug, the boundary between reality and dream quietly sways.

The 30s Perspective

Junhyuk Maeng, Publishing Editor

“Communication, Misunderstanding, and Adorable Power”



I have actually known the title of this book for a long time. Rather than knowing the title itself, the image of the massive, furry monster on the cover was so deeply etched into my mind that I remember passing by bookshelves wondering, “What on earth is this book about?” However, I had no clue what the words meant until now, when I finally discovered the secret. I never imagined it would mean something like that.

(If you do not yet know the meaning of the title, I encourage you to open the book before reading the rest of this review. The delightful thrill of realizing the meaning for the first time is something my writing can never replace.)

Our daily lives are a continuous series of minor misunderstandings. We might just put a period at the end of a message, yet the other person assumes we are deeply angry. Countless office workers waste energy analyzing the microscopic differences in temperature between various ways of saying “Yes,” while others spend their commute home writing tragic novels in their heads after seeing a manager’s expressionless face. In reality, that person might have just failed to get a job they wanted, missed out on a lottery win, or simply had indigestion from a heavy lunch. This exhausting cycle of communication—where we jump to conclusions about others’ intentions and preemptively build defensive walls—is frustrating, even when we know it is inevitable.

So, what exactly does that strange title, “Iparapa Yamooyamoo,” mean?

The furry creature on the cover is a giant being that suddenly appears in a village where tiny marshmallows live. The very first thing this monster shouts at the trembling marshmallows is:

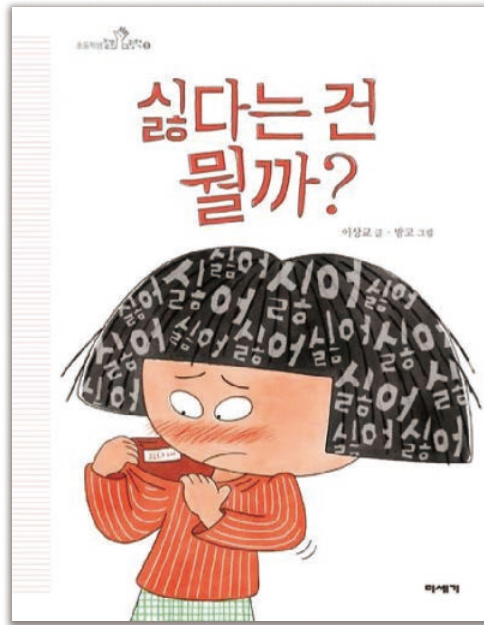
“Iparapa Yamooyamoo!”

The marshmallows instantly misunderstand this booming roar as a terrifying declaration of war, believing the monster is shouting “Yum-yum!” and threatening to eat them all up. However, the truth is both anti-climactic and pitiful. The monster, suffering from a severe cavity, was simply crying out for help in a lisping voice. What sounded like a threat was actually the monster saying “My teeth hurt so, so much,” which in Korean sounds remarkably similar to the title, “Iparapa Yamooyamoo.” The highlight of this book is the scene where the marshmallows, realizing the monster’s true situation, lay down their weapons and huddle together to treat the cavity. The black furball crying over a rotten tooth is adorable, but the white marshmallows are even cuter. They go from trembling with skewers to save their lives to suddenly transforming into reliable little dentists. Perhaps the ultimate weapon that overcomes tangled misunderstandings in an instant is none other than “cuteness.” In the face of such fatal cuteness, any defensive wall becomes completely useless.

So, if your heart ever feels heavy because of someone’s blunt tone or unreadable expression, think of this furry monster. Perhaps that person is not trying to attack you, but is inwardly shouting “Iparapa Yamooyamoo” while secretly suffering from their own version of a toothache, such as credit card bills or the pressure of meeting performance goals. While we can never perfectly translate the hidden circumstances of others, if we tear down our high defensive walls just a little and take a look, we will find that the world has a much cuter side than we might think.

The 40s Perspective

Mihyang Kim, Publishing Critic



What Does It Mean to Hate?

How can everything in the world be to our liking? Just as night follows day, where there are things we love, there are bound to be things we hate. Yet, for a long time, we have handled the emotion of “hate” poorly. Especially for children, we have demanded that they endure, refine, and sometimes even hide it.

What Does It Mean to Hate? raises questions from that very point. What is this feeling of “hate,” and how should we understand and express it? Lee Sang-kyo’s writing unfolds specific scenes of the discomfort that arises within friendships and the emotions that pile up when left unspoken. This book does not avoid the emotional hesitation children often face but addresses it head-on. Bamco’s illustrations deliver this message intuitively. From faces boiling with frustration and covering figures frozen in hesitation to the eventual moment of shouting “No!”, the shifts in emotion

are visualized through exaggerated forms and colors. This evokes a familiar emotional texture not only for children but also for adult readers in Korea who have often been preoccupied with suppressing negative feelings. In particular, the comic-style panel layout allows readers to naturally understand the process of emotions accumulating and finally bursting forth over time.

The most interesting aspect of this work is that it treats “hate” not as something to be corrected, but as a starting point for understanding. The feeling of hate is not a simple rejection; it is a signal to recognize what makes us uncomfortable. The book demonstrates that instead of suppressing or exploding with emotion, the process of explaining and communicating those feelings is actually another way to maintain a healthy relationship.

A particularly striking part is the scene where the word for hate, “싫다”, is broken down into its individual letters. The consonant “ㅅ” evokes words like “to live” (살아가다) and “to think” (생각하다). The bottom consonant “ㄹ” flows like a stream, and “ㅎ” expands into the image of the radiant sun. Through this process of deconstructing and re-examining the language itself, the emotion is transformed from a mere reaction into an object of deep contemplation.

The process in this book where “hate” eventually leads to “love” (사랑하다) can be understood in this same context. It is not a simple reversal of emotion, but a transformation that occurs through the process of re-examining our feelings through thought. As we look into what we hate and why, and as we unspool those feelings into language, “hate” gradually changes its shape. What began as discomfort and rejection becomes, the

moment we understand its reason, a sense that protects us. Furthermore, it becomes a passage through which we can understand others.

For this reason, the transformation shown in this book is not a story about eliminating “hate.” Rather, it shows that when an emotion is sufficiently contemplated, it can lead to other forms of understanding and empathy. “Hate” is not an emotion that disappears; it is an emotion that expands into new meanings through the process of understanding.

This is precisely why the book will resonate with international readers. It does not stop at merely explaining emotions. By deconstructing and reconstructing the Korean writing system (Hangeul) to reflect on emotional shifts, the book reveals a unique sensibility inherent to the Korean language. At the same time, by encouraging reflection on self-understanding and the boundaries of relationships through the universal emotion of “hate,” it draws out an empathy that transcends cultural differences.

The virtue of Korean picture books lies exactly at this intersection: starting from the most mundane emotions of daily life and expanding them into matters of language and contemplation. While *What Does It Mean to Hate?* unfolds this process in the language of a child, it leaves behind questions that remain profoundly valid even for adult readers.

The 50s Perspective

Dongseok Jang, Literary Critic



Something Strange

There is a child. The child is currently at a funeral hall. Their father has passed away. Upon turning the front cover, the title page reveals a portrait of a young man draped in black ribbon. Anyone of a certain age would grasp the situation instantly, but the child does not yet understand what this means. As the child bows alongside their mother to guests who have come to pay their respects, they simply think, “This is strange.” It is just strange that all these adults, whom the child has never met, speak as if they know “me” so well. The strange occurrences continue. Every single adult looks “terribly sad.” Unable to fathom why everyone is acting this way, the child is lost, not knowing what to say or what expression to wear.

People hold onto the child and weep, yet no tears come to the child at all. Not knowing the source of the adults’ grief, the child has nothing to say except that everything is “strange.” The child wishes the adults would stop

crying, but of course, things do not go their way. For a moment, the child wonders, “Should I be crying too?” but the tears simply do not fall. A thought flickers by: “Am I doing something wrong?” Soon, a feeling rushes in that perhaps it is not the people who are strange, but “Am I the one who is strange?” The child wishes it were all a dream or a lie, but it remains the undeniable reality.

After a period of time that feels like a dream or a lie, the child encounters their friend, Yeon-woo, in an alleyway. After staring at “me” for a moment, Yeon-woo says nothing and simply gives a tight hug. Only then does the child burst into tears. They finally begin to experience what sadness truly is and what their father’s absence actually means. However, Yeon-woo’s embrace does not stop at acknowledging grief or marking the void left behind. It is a deep consolation and, in a way, a filling of that void. Sadness never gives a warning before it arrives. Ultimately, the way to endure all the sorrows of life can only be found through those who meet our eyes and look at us from our own perspective.

Something Strange by Koo Sam-young is a picture book that honestly captures the unfamiliar emotions a child feels at their father’s funeral. To the child, everything is simply bizarre from the way strangers seem to know them to the sight of everyone weeping. “Why am I the only one not crying?” “What kind of face should I make?” The child remains bewildered, unable to grasp the grief of the adults. *Something Strange* is also the author’s own story, reflecting her experience of losing her mother at a young age. While the content of the book is moving, the author’s note is particularly heartwarming: “When someone beside you seems to be going through a very hard time, there are moments when you don’t know what to say. In those times, please just hold them quietly. Holding their hand firmly or

patting their back gently is also good. Quiet warmth seeps deep into the heart. I create stories hoping that such emotional resonance will reach someone.” This debut makes us look forward to the author’s next work with great anticipation.

Summary

Lee Sollim: Quietly rediscovering the world through a lowered perspective.

Maeng Junhyuk: The Adorable Power of Overcoming Misunderstandings

Kim Mihyang: Korean picture books that start from the most mundane emotions of daily life and expand them into matters of language and contemplation, resonating on a global scale

Jang Dong Seok: If only we could be someone who meets another at their eye level to comfort their grief...

Imagination Beyond Borders: The Whole New World in K-Picture Book

Written by

Thanadol Palaphun

Thanadol Palaphun | Rights Manager at Nanmeebooks Co., Ltd.

Thanadol Palaphun(Punn) is the Foreign Rights Manager at Nanmeebooks. An avid reader who grew up with the company's books, he now scouts compelling titles across genres to inspire a new generation of readers and foster a vibrant reading culture in Thailand.

Imagine a world where borders require no passports, thoughts have no ceilings, and the impossible becomes real. You might find yourself drifting on a cloud of cotton candy or catching fruit-flavored rain to make a bowl of shaved ice. That world, tucked inside a picture book, is simply waiting for a hand to reach out and a story to unfold. It is an essential place where imagination first ignites for the smallest of readers. Bringing these extraordinary worlds to Thai society and pushing beyond the story between the lines has been Nanmeebooks' vision and honor for over 30 years.

In recent years, Korean content and culture have gained widespread popularity across all age groups in Thailand and become a familiar part of our daily lives. Throughout my time managing international book rights for the Thai market, I have witnessed a continuous and overwhelming surge in the popularity of Korean titles. Among these, Korean picture books have emerged as one of the strongest and most resilient genres. With a diverse range of themes, including witty, laugh-out-loud stories and endearing character designs, as well as titles focused on knowledge and ethics, these books perfectly meet the diverse needs of their primary customers: parents and school personnel.

When observing the nature of Thai consumers, the most popular picture book characters are often those that move away from direct instruction or heavy emotional realism. Instead, they focus on positive storylines that spark imagination and encourage children to explore and build their own narratives. Most Thai parents and teachers believe that nurturing a positive spirit and a vivid imagination is key to helping children find their own voice. By encouraging them to speak their minds and explore new ideas, we are guiding them to grow into open-minded adults with a 'can-do' attitude - ready to embrace whatever the future holds.

A fascinating case study is the ‘*Yalacha MouseBrothers*’ (7 พี่น้องหนูจอมซน) series, which exemplifies this trend perfectly.



‘*Yalacha MouseBrothers*’ (7 พี่น้องหนูจอมซน) series

This seasonal series follows seven mouse siblings, each possessing a unique personality and playing a distinct role as the story unfolds. Together, they tackle unexpected challenges—most of which are of their own making—through collective creativity, always ending with a warm communal meal that leaves readers hungry for more and full of smiles. The richly detailed illustrations invite children to explore and ask questions, earning high praise from parents and schools for introducing early concepts of problem-solving skills and creative thinking.

Additionally, another key factor behind this success is the close collaboration with the copyright owners and the original illustrators. Together, we produced a Thai version of the series’ theme song for use

across bookstores, online platforms, and various book events—creating a catchy tune that has become highly recognizable among our customers.



(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MrJ3t8FQgwg>)

In closing, while the Thai picture book market faces more challenges than before, we remain confident that K-Picture Books will stand as a resilient and vital genre. Korean authors and illustrators continue to evolve, producing innovative works offering fresh perspectives and imaginative ideas. By designing books as living worlds—rather than mere instructional tools of the past—and fostering strong collaborations between licensors and publishers, we ensure that the borders of our shared imagination remain truly endless for years to come.

A Time to Discover the Stars Within Us

Written by

Jung Hae-sim

Jung Hae-sim | CEO of Kamome Picture Books

The author operates a picture bookshop for adults, offering curated recommendations through Tarot readings.



Where Did All These Stars Come From

The statement “there are stars within us” is more than just a poetic metaphor. It is a wondrous fact offered to us by both science and the humanities. As astronomer Carl Sagan once said, we are beings made of the remnants of dead stars, or “stardust.” In fact, the calcium and iron in our bodies are pieces of stars that were forged inside a star long ago and eventually reached us.

In philosophy and psychology, a “star” is often symbolized not merely as a celestial body but as a unique light dwelling within human nature, a guiding signpost that helps us keep our way even in the dark. Therefore, the idea that “there are stars within us” reminds us that just as countless stars in the night sky shine with different brightness and colors, we too are beings who harbor our own unique light and dreams. Furthermore, it makes us realize once again that we are part of a universe intimately connected to all existence.

Where Did All These Stars Come From is the first picture book in the “Books of Tomorrow” series, created to commemorate the 50th anniversary of

Borim Press. Author Lee Seong-pyo, who demonstrated a style of restrained tones and the beauty of empty space in his previous works, continues that same thread in this masterpiece. As if swimming through the invisible path of the wind, the author's brushwork is infinitely light and free. Gazing at the illustrations alone calms a restless mind and brings a refreshing sense of clarity to the heart.

Paper comes from trees, and trees grow from the soil. In the end, the homeland of paper is the soil. The cover, which allows one to feel the texture of paper directly, is also part of the experience of encountering the elements of stars. Along with the gentle touch of the cover, the author speaks to us, asking, "Where did all these stars come from?" These words feel like a question: "When was the moment you discovered a star?" The author points to moments like playing in the water, when a cool breeze blows over a grassy field, or when the sky is incredibly blue. Of course, the answer will be different for everyone.

Nevertheless, the "star-shining moments" we remember are likely pleasant memories that bring a smile to our faces whenever we think of them. Nature, which is always by our side, and the people we love. We would call the fleeting moments spent with them "happiness." In that sense, this is a picture book that contains the joy of life—fully exploring, sensing, and remembering the origins of happiness.

The Present and Future of Korean Non-Fiction Publishing

Written by

Ryu Young-ho

Ryu Young-ho | General Manager at Kyobo Book Centre.

He served as a Director at Kyobo Book Centre, where he was responsible for strategic planning and new business development. Currently, he is leading projects related to data and artificial intelligence. His published works include *Economics of Amazon.com* (Acorn, 2013), *Strategy for Publishing Innovation* (Minumsa, 2013), *Understanding the Global E-book Market* (Korea Publishing Marketing Institute, 2014), *The Publishing Revolution* (Korea Publishing Marketing Institute, 2019), and *The Future of Bookstores* (alookso, 2024). In recognition of his contributions, he received the Excellence Award at the 21st Korea Publishing Criticism Awards in 2015 and the Commendation for Meritorious Service in Publishing from the Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism on the 39th Book Day in 2025.

Non-fiction has long played a pivotal role in the publishing market as both a knowledge infrastructure and a forum for public discourse, yet its status has recently begun to falter. Although the number of new titles published remains steady on the surface, the decline in actual sales volume and market share indicates that the non-fiction market is weakening from within.

This phenomenon is difficult to explain solely by a decrease in the reading population or a shift away from traditional media. Rather, it should be viewed as a structural inflection point occurring in the process of fundamentally reorganizing the systems of knowledge production, distribution, and consumption due to accelerated digital transformation (DX). Ultimately, the stagnation of non-fiction symbolizes a paradigm shift in the publishing market, where traditional knowledge systems confront a new era of order.

Shift in Knowledge Consumption Landscapes and Deepening Imbalance Between Media

The most notable change is the weakening market competitiveness of “books” as a medium and the structural expansion of substitutes. In the past, books were virtually the only gateway to acquiring specialized knowledge in a particular field. Today, however, readers consume knowledge through various channels such as video platforms, short-form content, and real-time information services. These media hold an advantage in terms of speed, intuitiveness, and accessibility. Consequently, purchasing and reading non-fiction books requires a financial investment of tens of thousands of won and a significant amount of time. As a result, these activities are being perceived as high-cost, low-efficiency options. In

particular, search-based environments create an illusion where mere accessibility is mistaken for comprehensive understanding. This leads to a shallow leveling of knowledge depth and acts as a fundamental factor weakening the motivation to purchase non-fiction books.

The lack of internal planning capabilities within the publishing industry and the problematic migration of authors are becoming increasingly severe. Currently, the Korean non-fiction market tends to rely heavily on portfolios centered around translated books rather than original, self-generated planning. While the strategy of quickly introducing content already proven successful abroad is effective for securing short-term stability, it inevitably leads to the shrinking of the local author ecosystem in the long run. In particular, the lack of investment in investigative writing or non-fiction projects based on long-term reporting is a key factor that thins the depth of the market.

At the same time, there is an accelerating trend of experts and influential authors migrating to new media platforms such as YouTube, newsletters, and social media. This shift signifies more than just a change in channels; it indicates that the epicenter of knowledge production is moving outside the realm of traditional publishing. As a result, the market is becoming locked into a structure where projects prioritize speed over quality, leading to an increase in trend-driven, self-help style non-fiction.

The market environment on the demand side has also undergone rapid changes. Prolonged low growth and the contraction of household finances have forced readers to adopt a more selective and utility-oriented consumption pattern. As a result, healing-themed content that offers emotional rewards, along with investment and self-help materials applicable

to immediate daily life, is quickly replacing intellectual exploration.

In this climate, what the publishing ecosystem needs is not simple quantitative expansion, but a recovery of planning and editorial capabilities. Publishing can no longer remain a mere medium for delivering knowledge and information. Instead, the core competitiveness must lie in the ability to filter excessive information, contextualize its meaning, and organize it into a cohesive narrative through storytelling. In particular, there is a pressing need to strengthen investigative non-fiction that persistently tracks the structural problems and realities of Korean society. Furthermore, narrative non-fiction, which deals with facts while employing novelistic techniques to create a compelling read, must also be reinforced.



Banner for the non-fiction book fair “This is Text,” held from January 31 to February 1, 2026. The event achieved meaningful results by focusing on the theme of diversity within the non-fiction publishing ecosystem. Source: This is Text X (formerly Twitter) account @thisistext_kr

Redefining the Models for the “Post-Book” Era and Expanding the Ecosystem

Furthermore, the publishing industry must design content expansion models for the “post-book” era. A single work of non-fiction should maximize its added value by expanding into diverse formats, such as online and offline lectures, podcasts, documentaries, and community discussions. This task goes beyond simple secondary rights businesses. It is a strategic effort to establish a “content lifecycle” where knowledge circulates and spreads in a virtuous cycle.

Ultimately, the crisis in the Korean non-fiction market is not a disappearance of demand, but rather a delay occurring during a period of structural transition. In an era overflowing with information and volatile content, the value of non-fiction becomes even more significant because it delivers verified facts and deep insights. What matters now is the recovery of function rather than form.

Publishing must reclaim its inherent role of guaranteeing the credibility and interpretative power of knowledge. At the same time, it should build delivery methods optimized for a diversified media environment. Only when this fundamental improvement is achieved can the non-fiction market be reborn as the heart of the knowledge ecosystem and the intellectual foundation of our society.

Kepler49: Opening the Future of K-Popup Books

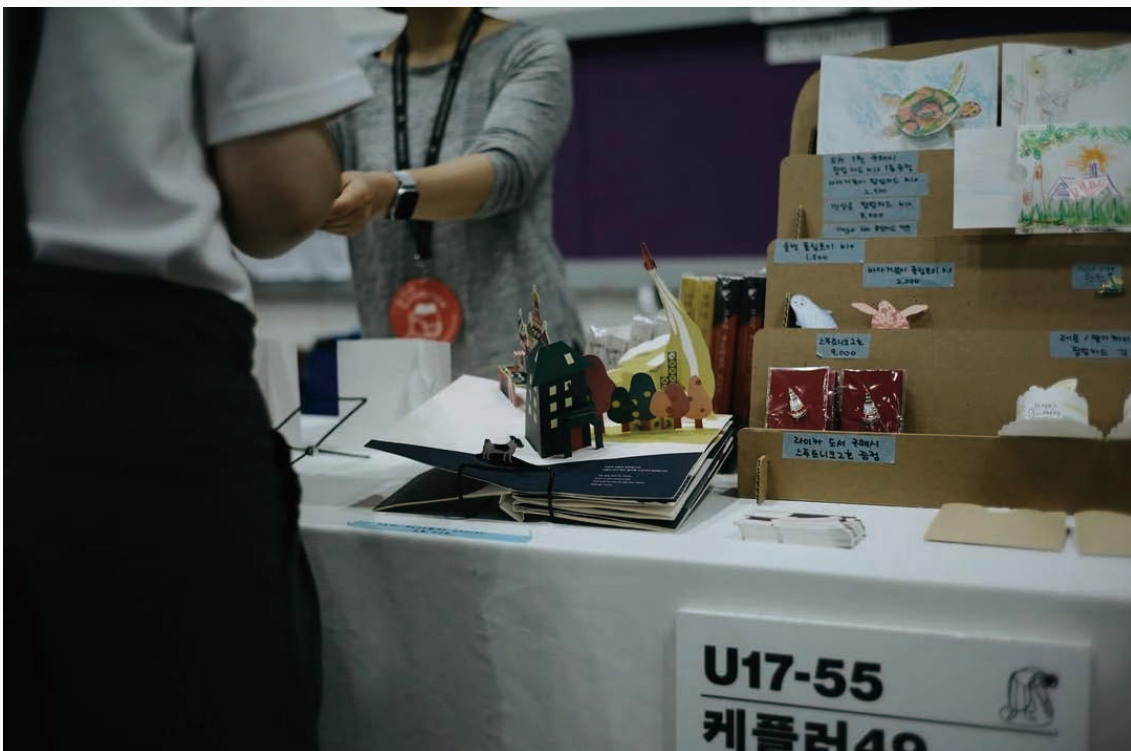
Interview by

The Contents Factory Co., Ltd.

Chung, Hyekyung | Publisher / Paper Engineer

After studying visual design and teaching paper engineering, the author founded and currently operates Kepler49, the first publishing house in Korea specializing in popup books, designing three-dimensional worlds within the pages of a book.

Kepler49 is a pioneer in the popup book market, a field that is still unfamiliar in the domestic market. They create popup books that comfort the sensibilities of not only children but also adults, including titles such as *Garden*, *Zoological*, *Zhuchka*, *Kudryavka*, *Laika*, *Dokdo*, *The Isle of Rocky Waves*, and *Fly, Baby Songbird*. In this May 2026 issue, we delve into Kepler49's unique vision, the reasons why they create popup books, and the future of the popup book medium.



Publisher Kepler49 ©Kepler49

Q. First, could you give us a brief introduction to your publishing house? Tell us about the types of books Kepler49 publishes.

Kepler49 is a publisher that hopes popup books can be both books and toys that provide a brief rest and small joy in life. Since opening our doors in 2014, we primarily focused on editorial design in our early years. However, starting with our first book, *Garden*, *Zoological*, in 2020, we have been creating and publishing our own original popup books.

Rather than just creating flashy art books, we aim to produce sturdy popup picture books that the general public can comfortably enjoy. We select themes that both children and adults can resonate with, and our signature style is to produce them in an “accessible format” so that readers can take them off the shelf and enjoy them frequently.

Q. What do you think is the unique charm of popup books? And was there a specific reason why you started making them?

The charm of a popup book lies in its ability to direct space, much like a theater stage, and the fact that readers can have an “experience that goes beyond the book” through direct interaction. It offers an experience akin to “play,” where moving one’s hands to interact with the book transcends simple reading. Popup elements become incredibly effective tools for stories where a sense of space is crucial, for instance, when conveying the cramped feeling of an animal’s enclosure in a zoo.



Garden, Zoological

I still cannot forget the excitement I felt in my 20s when I first saw the

popup book *Surprise! Colors*. At that time, most popup books in Korea were translations, and their themes were largely limited to early childhood. The racing heart I felt then has stayed with me to this day. That earnest desire to see more original Korean popup books that both adults and children can enjoy together is what led me to run this publishing house.

Q. What is the current status of the Korean popup book industry, and what are the challenges you have faced as a publisher?

In the domestic market, the stereotype that “popup books are only for toddlers aged 0 to 3” is still very firm. Because of this, stand-alone popup books that aim to embrace adult readers as well often face difficulties in sales.



Unlike regular books, popup books are completed through a meticulous process of numerous manual steps based on elaborate architectural blueprints. ©Kepler49

The production process is also incredibly demanding. A popup book is a “book that cannot be completed by machines alone.” Each popup structure must be assembled by hand, and we utilize a specialized technique called lay-flat binding. Since there are not many facilities in Korea specializing in popup production, we must invest a tremendous amount of effort into securing production timelines and maintaining rigorous quality control.

Q. In an era overflowing with digital content, what kind of future does Kepler49 dream of? What is your vision and goal for the future?

In an era where everything is becoming digitized, I believe the value of “physical paper books” will never disappear. Popup books, in particular, are a unique medium that stimulates not only sight but also touch and even hearing through the subtle sounds of paper interlocking.



Zuchka, Kudryavka, Laika ©Kepler49

Our future goal is to “effectively realize stories where space is crucial through popups” and deliver them to our readers. My heart still races whenever I think about popup books. I want to continue sharing this sense of “excitement” and “joy” with my readers.

Imagination Sketched in Colored Pencils: *The Pencil* by Author Kim Hye Eun

Interview by

The Contents Factory Co., Ltd.

Kim Hye Eun | picturebook author

I am a storyteller who looks closely at the things often overlooked in the familiar. I dedicate myself to creating "clothing" in the form of books for the subjects that are reimagined through the favoritism of my gaze. I hope that at the end of this gaze, warmth and resonance may always linger. I have worked on illustrations for various advertisements and media, and I am the author and illustrator of the picture book *The Pencil*.

Instagram: @hyeeun_aa

Trees are felled whenever a pencil is made. Author Kim Hyeun is a picture book author who reflects on the sacrifice of trees. Her book, *The Pencil*, was born from a heart that cherishes both art and nature. We interviewed Kim Hyeun, an author who cares deeply for both her craft and the environment, to explore her imagination and thoughts.



The Pencil

Q. Was there a specific inspiration that led you to write *The Pencil*?

The Pencil is my very first book. I felt a lot of pressure and spent much time worrying about how to fully capture my own thoughts in my debut picture book. At first, I tried to create a story around grand and flashy subjects, but those attempts felt like wearing someone else's clothes. One day, while sitting at my desk during my ordinary daily routine, a pencil on my workbench caught my eye. As I stared at it blankly for a moment, I suddenly wanted to tell its story. At that time, my work mostly involved using pencils and colored pencils to create detailed illustrations. Whenever I sharpened a dull pencil tip, I would often feel a

pang of guilt for the wood falling away.

I discovered a contradiction in drawing trees using the very tool created by carving them. We use pencils, made through the sacrifice of actual trees, to draw forests full of trees. Then, we find comfort and feel moved by those drawings. We are looking at artistic representations of trees made by cutting down real ones. This irony fascinated me, and that is how *The Pencil* began. I created this story while thinking about the pencil as an entity that labors between my fingers, leaving only traces behind as its body disappears. It is a tool that is so easily within reach, but it was once a tree that stood tall and guarded its land in a vast forest.



Illustrations from *The Pencil*

Q. What kind of sensibility do you think pencils and colored pencils bring to a picture book?

I remember the first pencil I held as a child. I can still recall the curiosity on my face and my small, clumsy hand gripping it tight. To me, the pencil is a medium that holds purity and warmth. I love the soft scratching sound, the seogeok-seogeok and sagak-sagak, as the pencil moves across the paper, and I enjoy the light feeling of a pencil held in my hand. Even the ache in my hand after working for a long time gives me a sense of accomplishment, a feeling of “I’ve truly created something.” This is why I love pencils, even if they are considered a somewhat conventional material.

A pencil hides a power within its small frame to create things far beyond what one might imagine. This power is not revealed to everyone; instead, it depends on the pencil’s destiny. Depending on whose hand it is held by, it might become a pencil that is simply used for scribbling and then thrown away, or it could be the very tool that brings an entire forest to life.



Illustrations from *The Pencil*

Q. Your book, *The Pencil*, has gained significant international recognition, including being selected for the 2022 Bologna Ragazzi Amazing Bookshelf and the 2025 New York Times & New York Public Library Best Illustrated Children's Books. What do you think is the secret behind this great success?

Publishing a picture book was not an easy task for me. The world is full of excellent picture books and renowned authors, and stories are consumed so rapidly that it feels as if there is nothing new left to tell. At one point, when I was trying to create something grand, I found myself unable to move forward. *The Pencil* was finally born when I decided to find a story from the things closest to me.

I believe the reason it is loved lies in the empathy that comes from a simple and familiar subject, as well as the sense of irony conveyed through my story. I also think the broad appeal of a wordless picture book, which unfolds the narrative through images alone, played a role in its popularity. These books are more accessible because they transcend generations, nationalities, and languages.

Q. Could you share your future plans and a message for the readers who love your picture books?

After a long period of reflection, I am now preparing my next book. To me, a picture book is “a world I have drawn.” It is a collection of childhood memories and a compass for the path I follow as I live through the present. It would make me incredibly happy if readers could laugh, cry, and empathize with the stories I unfold through my illustrations.

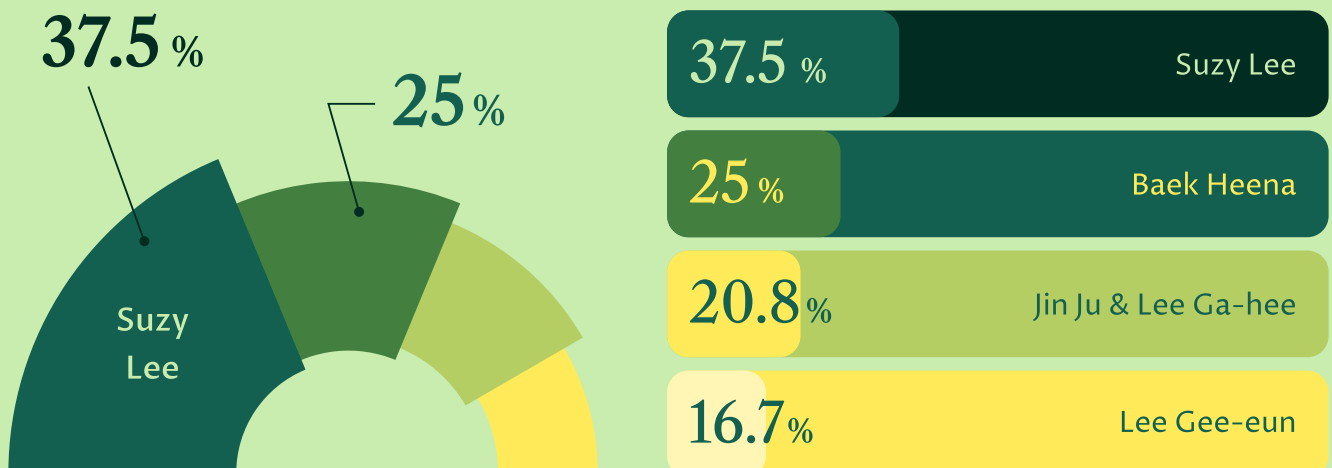
There may be days when my work is overlooked, but that is okay. My stories begin with reflecting on the value of small, everyday things close to me and asking myself, “What kind of effort am I making for them?” I will continue to create the stories I want to tell from my place, quietly and steadily, crafting books that keep readers curious and eager to open them. I ask for your continued interest and support for my future work.

Authors Leading the Way for Korean Picture Books

Edited by

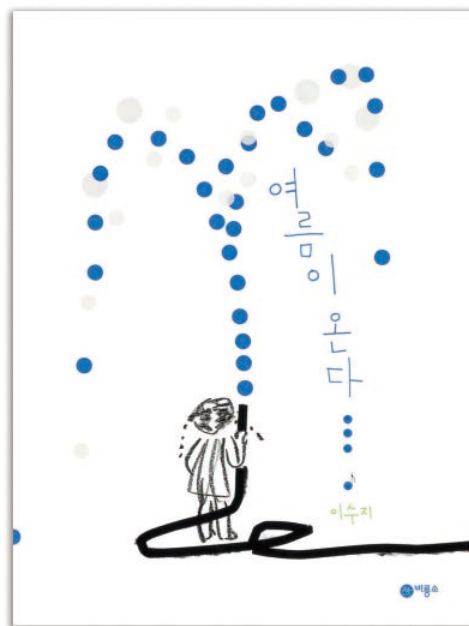
The Contents Factory Co., Ltd.

Q. Which Korean picture book author would you like to meet at the book fair?



The poll for our May issue asked readers which Korean picture book author first comes to mind. The results highlighted several representative artists, each capturing readers with their unique charm. Suzy Lee took the top spot in this poll, receiving 37.5% of the votes. However, in this issue, we will introduce the works of all the featured authors regardless of the rankings. Every author leading the Korean picture book scene deserves respect, and their individual artistic value cannot be measured by numbers alone. With that in mind, we would like to introduce four beloved teams of creators.

The first author is Suzy Lee, who earned 37.5% of the vote. She is an author who delicately unfolds the boundaries between reality and imagination by experimenting with the visual and physical properties of books. Having published her works in numerous countries, she gained significant international acclaim in 2022 when she became the first Korean to win the Hans Christian Andersen Award in the Illustrator category.



Summer Comes

The second author is Baek Heena, who received 25% of the vote. She is well-known for her original creative process, which combines handmade

dolls, miniature sets, lighting, and photography. Her stories have been widely loved for breathing magical moments into everyday life. Her representative works include *Cloud Bread*, *The Bathhouse Fairy*, and *Magic Candies*. In 2020, she was honored with the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (ALMA)



Cloud Bread

The third authors are Jin Ju and Lee Ga-hee, who received 20.8% of the vote. Through their book *If You Want to Eat a Red Apple*, the duo demonstrated the potential of lyrical picture books that place photography at the forefront. Their work left a deep impression by warmly capturing the essence of patience and the time required for growth. This book earned recognition for its artistic quality and originality, winning the Grand Prize in the Opera Prima category at the 2025 Bologna Ragazzi Awards.



If You Want to Eat a Red Apple

Finally, we introduce author Lee Gee-Eun, who received 16.7% of the vote. With her playful imagination and powerful storytelling, she is a picture book author beloved by children and adults alike. She is well-known for her highly original works, including *The Legend of Red Bean Shaved Ice*, *The Legend of Friends*, *Suba the Sun King*, and *Iparapa Yamooyamoo*. Her book *Iparapa Yamu Yamu* earned her the Bologna Ragazzi Award in 2021.



Iparapa Yamooyamoo

Korean picture books have evolved beyond simple reading materials for children. Today, they engage global readers as a distinct form of cultural content that seamlessly blends artistry, narrative depth, and visual originality. The results of this poll demonstrate that Korean authors are building their own unique creative worlds, gaining consistent empathy and interest both at home and abroad.

Korean picture books have continually expanded their possibilities by showcasing a broad spectrum of excellence. This includes the harmony between text and illustration, the innovative use of materials and formats, and even the meticulous scene compositions that enhance emotional density. These authors, who possess a balance of imagination, sensitivity, and craftsmanship, are the key figures shaping the sophisticated and profound image of K-Books today.

Moreover, while Korean picture books vividly reflect the unique personality and aesthetics of each author, they also resonate deeply with global readers by delicately capturing universal emotions and experiences. A key strength of Korean picture books lies in their ability to capture life's small moments through a fresh lens, creating narratives that both children and adults can relate to.

This trend shows that Korean picture books are establishing themselves as cultural content that possesses both contemporary sensibilities and artistic excellence. Moving forward, these books will continue to reach more readers across generations and languages, clearly conveying the creativity and artistry of K-Books to the world.

Editor. **Hannah Lee** | The Contents Factory Co., Ltd. CEO

Designing 'More' Innovative Communication and Experiences Through Content.

My Child is a Talker, My Nephew is an Interviewer

Edited by

The Contents Factory Co., Ltd.

Welcome to *Book Grocery*, a monthly K-Book Trends feature that recommends books based on readers' real stories. If you would like to receive a book recommendation tailored to your concerns or situation, please submit your story through the form below.

[Submit your story](#)

A Story from a Mother Raising a Son

I am a mother raising a son. Since he was about two years old, my child has been exceptionally articulate. He started speaking earlier than his peers, always had plenty to say, and above all, talked incessantly. At daycare, I constantly heard things like, “He’s so bright,” and “He expresses himself so well.” Naturally, I assumed, “My child and I communicate so well together.”

However, there was a day when that assumption was completely shattered. It happened when I met my nephew, who is the same age as my son. Meeting him after a long time, I noticed my nephew had grown into an elementary schooler who chatted away comfortably. But something about him was different.

“Auntie, what did you do today?”

When I answered, he followed up with, “Oh, was that tiring for you?”

And then, “Are you feeling a bit better now?”

...Wait a minute. Is this an interview? I was momentarily stunned by how he listened to my words and continued the conversation with relevant questions.

“This... this is what a real conversation feels like.”

I began to reflect on the “conversations” I had with my son.

“Mom! I’m going to give you a quiz!”

“Mom needs to rest for a bit right now...”

(Three minutes later)

“Mom! Okay, now I’m going to give you a quiz!”

Ah, my home was a broadcasting station. A one-way transmission. That was the day I realized that being good at speaking and being good at conversing are two entirely different skills. It struck me that my son was a wonderful talker, while my nephew was an interviewer.

These days, I am trying to move beyond just speaking and listening with my child to engage in “true conversation.”

“Son, let’s listen to Mom for a bit and really talk together!”

Recommended Book for This Story

This story was sent to us from Changwon, Gyeongsangnam-do.



The Big Ears That Make Friends

When raising children, it is easy to assume that a child who speaks well is also good at conversing. However, true conversation begins not with speaking one's own mind well, but with listening to the other person and reaching their heart.

For this story, I would like to recommend the picture book *The Big Ears That Make Friends*. This book warmly conveys that the power to make friends lies less in witty speech and more in the attitude of listening to another person's story. It is a picture book that teaches children the importance of the "power of listening" while prompting parents to reconsider the essence of communication. If you want to start a real conversation with your talkative child, I highly recommend opening this book together.

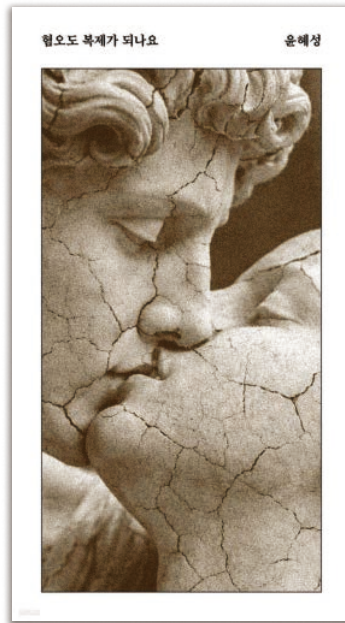
What If You Encountered Your Own Clone One Day?

Written by

Jung-Ah Shin

Jung-Ah Shin | Culture Critic, Adjunct Professor, Division of Performing Arts, Baekseok Arts University

A TV documentary writer who has scripted over 400 episodes, the author is deeply interested in the intersection of cultural content and humanistic imagination. With a love for the stories of people and the world embedded in media, she believes in the power of good content to change the world. Major publications include *Elderly in Media*, *Elderly outside Media*, *Living with AI*, *New Media and Story-doing*, *Cultural Content and Transmedia*, and *Media Literacy Education for Digital Literacy*, etc.



Can Hate Be Replicated?, Yoon, Hye-seong, 2026.

Yoon, Hye-seong’s debut novel, *Can Hate Be Replicated?*, has been released as part of the “Short Series” by Safe House (Anjeongaok), a publisher specializing in genre fiction. Safe House is a production studio that creates and distributes stories for “fandoms” of genres such as SF, fantasy, mystery, horror, and romance. Author Yoon previously co-wrote the script for the K-drama 〈The Dream Life of Mr. Kim〉. While that drama offered a realistic and satirical portrayal of the lives of Korean office workers, *Can Hate Be Replicated?* explores a deeply human story of alienation, conflict, and the eventual downfall of a couple facing extreme suffering. The novel is categorized as a “Gyeong-jangpyeon,” a format that can be described as a novella—a medium-length story that offers an accessible reading experience.

The protagonist, Su-han, lost his wife a year ago. While nursing his wife through the agonizing pain of pancreatic cancer, he found himself becoming increasingly exhausted, leading to a growing inability to empathize with her loneliness and sorrow. As she refused surgery and grew

more frail by the day, Su-han was so consumed by his own suffering that he had no room left to care for her. The fragile bond between the couple spirals toward disaster following a scene Su-han accidentally witnesses: a male nurse, shirtless, tenderly washing his wife's hair as they both laugh happily. His wife, a native of Libellaus (near Russia), struggled with the Korean language, yet she seemed to communicate well with this man. When his wife tried to explain the situation using a machine translation to her enraged husband, Su-han instead unleashed a torrent of curses and fury, shouting, "If you want to die so bad, then just die!" Shortly after, his wife passed away. When her mother took away their only son, Jey, Su-han was left utterly alone.

Then, one day, a package arrives under his late wife Nana's name. Inside is RE Su-han—a clone with the exact same blood type and DNA as Su-han. It comes with a mysterious note: "You should try living with a bastard like yourself, too."

The author's imagination unfolds by peering into the "original" Su-han's pain through the eyes of RE Su-han, the clone who carries Nana's memories and the couple's past happiness. Instead of the husband who was exhausted by her illness, Nana chose to clone the version of him from their youth—the time when their love was most tender and pure. What she ultimately yearned for was the love of her real husband; however, humans, fragile as they are in the face of suffering, often become trapped within their own tragedies, blinded to the pain of others. Through this unsettling encounter with RE Su-han—the "uncomfortable legacy" left behind by his late wife—Su-han experiences a profound sense of loss and remorse for what he has destroyed. Yet, through their son Jey, who had to endure the full weight of his parents' sorrow and separation, the author offers a subtle

hint of hope. Even in the post-human era, it is human kindness and forgiveness that will remain the forces that sustain our lives.

April Blooms: Bestsellers of the Month

Edited by

The Contents Factory Co., Ltd.

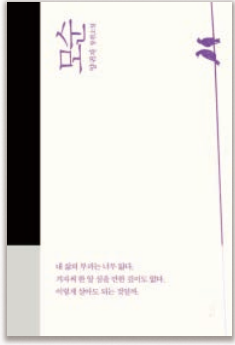

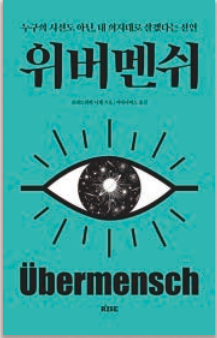


Major franchises dominate the majority of South Korea's offline bookstore market. Currently, four major franchises—Kyobo Book Centre, Youngpoong Bookstore, Jongno Books, and Arc N Book—are competing in the offline retail sector. Starting with Kyobo Book Centre, which has the largest number of branches, followed by Youngpoong Bookstore, Jongno Books, and Arc N Book, we will examine the top 10 best-selling books.

In our previous issue, we examined the bestsellers at Kyobo Book Centre. For our May edition—the third installment of our offline bookstore analysis—we focus on the bestseller list from Jongno Books for the first week of April. Taking the top spot at Jongno Books this week is *Project Hail Mary*, published by RHK (RH Korea). This surge in popularity is directly linked to the cinematic release of the film adaptation, 〈Project Hail Mary〉, which hit theaters this past March. The film’s success has reignited massive interest in Andy Weir’s original novel, propelling it to No. 1. Similar to last month, children’s literature continues to show strong performance, with two titles making the Top 10. Notably, *Mellow TV: Idol Trivia Debut Challenge, Vol. 1*, an educational comic (learning manhwa) designed to teach general knowledge to young readers, has climbed the charts alongside popular picture books. Other mainstays in the Top 10 include *Goethe Said Everything*, *Contradictions*, and *Rapid*. These titles, which were favorites last month as well, indicate that the fiction category remains a dominant force at the top of the charts.




Jongno Books Bestsellers: 1st Week of April 2026

Rank	Cover	Title / Author / Publisher / Genre
1		<i>Project Hail Mary</i>
		Andy Weir (trans. Kang Dong-Hyeok)
		RH Korea
		Fiction
2		<i>Goethe Said Everything</i>
		Yui Suzuki
		Leaf
		Fiction

Jongno Books Bestsellers: 1st Week of April 2026

Rank	Cover	Title / Author / Publisher / Genre
3		Contradictions
		Yang Gui-ja
		Ssuda
		Fiction
4		Mom Became a Ghost!
		Nobumi
		Gilbut Children's Books
		Children's Books
5		Übermensch: A Declaration to Live by My Own Will, Not by Anyone Else's
		Friedrich Nietzsche
		RISE
		Humanities
6		Rapid (Today's Young Writers 40)
		Jeong Dae-geon
		Minumsa
		Fiction
7		Honmono
		Seong Hae-na
		Changbi
		Fiction

Jongno Books Bestsellers: 1st Week of April 2026

Rank	Cover	Title / Author / Publisher / Genre
8		<i>The Perfect Caveman</i>
		Jachung
		Philotic Publishing
		Humanities/Non-fiction
9		<i>Mellow TV: Idol Trivia Debut Challenge, Vol. 1</i>
		Mellow TV(original), Nam Ji-eun (author), ThreeFour (Illustrator), Pyo Su-hyeon (Editor)
		Haksan Kids
		Children's Books
10		<i>An Adult's Happiness is Quiet</i>
		Taesoo
		Page 2 Books
		Essay

A Literary Journey to Andong with Children for Korea’s “Family Month”

Edited by

The Contents Factory Co., Ltd.

Andong, a city where the noble “Yangban” spirit remains very much alive, is also home to a dedicated literary museum for children. In this edition of K-Book Map, we invite you to Andong, a destination where families can immerse themselves in both traditional Korean culture and children’s literature this “Family Month”. For those seeking a getaway that harmonizes Korea’s timeless traditions with contemporary cultural experiences, we highly recommend this journey that promises satisfaction for all generations.

Kwon Jung Saeng Children's Literature Museum

Your journey should begin at Kwon Jung Saeng Children's Literature Museum, a literary museum dedicated to the beloved author of the classic story, *Doggy Poo*. This welcoming space is open for walk-in visits (closed on Mondays) and features an exhibition hall where families can explore the life and literary world of Kwon Jung Saeng. The facility includes a cozy library where parents and children can read his books together, as well as an on-site bookstore. What makes this place truly special is its versatility; it's not just a quiet reading room. It features an indoor playground where children can run and play freely, offering a dynamic and engaging experience that blends reading with active fun.



Kwon Jung Saeng Children's Literature Museum
(source: Tour Andong, <https://www.tourandong.com>)

Andong Municipal Children's Library

If you are looking for even more stories for the whole family, make sure to visit the Andong Municipal Children's Library, located in the heart of the city. The library is thoughtfully designed with desks, chairs, and bookshelves

perfectly sized for children. It also offers exceptional convenience for parents with infants, featuring a dedicated nursing room and a microwave for baby food. Whether you are visiting with a toddler or an infant, the library provides a comfortable environment to read aloud and let your child's imagination take flight. While the little ones are immersed in their books, parents can also enjoy a selection of adult literature available in separate reading rooms. It is a truly inclusive destination that ensures every member of the family has a rewarding literary experience.



Andong Municipal Children's Library
(source: Andong Municipal Library, <https://lib.andong.go.kr>)

Confucian Land

After spending a quiet afternoon with books, we recommend heading to Confucian Land to explore the “Seonbi” (Confucian scholar) culture. Located near the city center, this edutainment theme park allows families to engage with Confucian values in a fun, modern way. The facility features a specialized museum and stunning media art installations that bring ancient philosophies to life. Furthermore, with its age-appropriate “Seonbi Village” and dedicated play areas for children, it offers a well-rounded cultural experience. It is a

place where parents can relax and children can play, all while discovering the profound roots of Korean tradition.



Andong Municipal Children's Library
(source: Andong Municipal Library, <https://lib.andong.go.kr>)

Andong Jjimdak Street

One of the greatest joys for any traveler in Andong is undoubtedly the chance to experience a truly special dinner. While the city is famous for its Gangeungeo (salted mackerel), the real star of the show is the original Andong Jjimdak (braised chicken). In the heart of downtown Andong, you'll find Jjimdak Street, where the authentic flavor of this beloved dish first began. Home to over 30 specialized restaurants and located right next to the charming Boribap (barley rice) Street, it is the perfect place to wrap up your day. After a day of reading and immersing yourselves in Korea's heritage, there is no better way to spend a happy evening with your family than sharing a warm, hearty meal here..



Kwon Jung Saeng Children's Literature Museum
(source: Tour Andong, <https://www.tourandong.com>)

After exploring the grounds, it is a pleasant idea to stop by “Cafe Seo-hee” within the park for a brief rest. Named after Seo-hee, the central protagonist of *The Land*, the cafe reflects the world of the novel even in its offerings. For instance, menu items named “Seo-hee” or “Toji” stand out. While sipping a cup of tea and slowly leafing through one of Pak’s novels available there, one finds themselves reflecting on the precious things often overlooked in the busyness of daily life.

Address

Kwon Jung Saeng Children's Literature Museum: 119, Seongnam-gil, Iljik-myeon, Andong-si, Gyeongsangbuk-do, Republic of Korea
Andong Municipal Children's Library: 113-14, Gangnam 5-gil, Andong-si, Gyeongsangbuk-do, Republic of Korea

Confucian Land: 346-30, Gwangwangdanji-ro, Andong-si,
Gyeongsangbuk-do, Republic of Korea

Andong Jjimdak Street: 30, Beonyeong-gil, Andong-si,
Gyeongsangbuk-do, Republic of Korea