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# K-Book Trends

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## TOPIC

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## The Art of Selling Books: Innovative Strategies by Korean Booksellers

Written by Gu Sun-A (Writer and head of Chaegbang Yeonhui)

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You will be able to find the figures for “reading preferences” in the results of the National Reading Survey conducted by the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism in Korea last year. It gives a hint to the “actual” reading population based on the ratio of people liking books. The overall reading rate covering paper books, e-books, and audio books was 95.8% for elementary, middle, and high school students and 43.0% for adults; the actual reading preferences turned out to be 39.6% for students and 18.3% for adults. The actual reading rate, which means readings done autonomously, is cut in half from the overall reading rate as the overall figure includes cases in which people have to read books for necessary reasons, such as for work or educational purposes. Why do people read books, but have very

few “enjoyable” experiences reading them? Well, considering the research result announced last year that says 6 out of 10 Korean adults read not even a single book a year, we probably should be thankful that people read at all.

Then, what should you do first to “experience a book”? It would be either buying or borrowing one. Meeting a book is the beginning of experiencing a book. Reading comes after that. So, all bookstores in Korea - big and small - are making various attempts to increase sales and to boost reading experiences. They are trying to help people start their book experience in a fun, enjoyable way to later become a reader who “likes” reading books.

### **People buy books not knowing what they are about**

What is the first thing that catches your eye when choosing a book? For many, it would be the book’s cover, title, or author’s name. But, did you know that recently, more Korean readers have been buying books without even knowing what they are about? This phenomenon is referred to as purchasing “blind books.” This newly-coined term, “blind book,” refers to books introduced or bought without any information about their covers, titles, authors, and content. So, readers get to meet books without any knowledge of them. Bookstores’ packaging and introducing books in their own unique way is the biggest characteristic of blind books. Sometimes, they quote key

sentences from the book or share some keywords related to it. Readers choose books based on keywords of interest to them or their taste in book packaging without bias. The trust in the curation of the bookstore manager also plays a significant role, meaning that blind books rely on faith in the bookstore manager and coincidence. The types of blind books are evolving as they attract more attention from readers. For example, blind books are being distributed under specific themes or concepts, such as “birthday books” - books by authors with the same birthday as you, “MBTI books” - books about your personality, “constellation books,” and “seasonal books.”

Nowadays, publishers and libraries are increasingly offering books in the form of blind books. For example, at the 2024 Seoul International Book Fair (SIBF), many publishers’ booths curated and introduced books in the form of blind books, and a library in Suwon, Gyeonggi-do, recommends books based on the MBTI personalities. In addition, libraries in many cities, including Incheon, Goyang, Yangpyeong, Chuncheon, Cheongju, and Osong, are operating blind book lending services or exhibiting them.

### **A book written by a writer whose birthday is the same as you**

The most popular type of blind book is, by far, “birthday books.” As mentioned earlier, birthday books are books written by authors who were born on the same day as your birthday. First

introduced in Korea around 2017, birthday books are currently available in various bookstores across the country. In 2018, IGMU (읽을마음), a bookstore specializing in birthday books, opened in Gwangmyeong-si, Gyeonggi-do. Its founder realized that he wanted to run his own bookstore as he worked as a marketer for a publishing company and was in charge of a directly managed bookstore in Hapjeong, Seoul. It was around 2015 that the story of “Birthday Bunko” by Marunouchi Reading Style, a large Japanese bookstore, began to be known in Korea. He thought it would be great to have a birthday bookstore in Korea, too, and he started collecting authors’ birthdays in his spare time while working.

IGMU first participated in the 2022 SIBF and sold over 1,500 books in a single booth. At the 2023 SIBF, it sold over 2,700 books in two booths, and at the 2024 SIBF, where it participated in a joint pavilion with a reduced booth size, it sold over 1,500 books. As of 2024, IGMU has collected 3,644 birthday books by compiling the birthdays of 2,664 authors. One reader looking for a birthday book said, “It’s perfect for when you want to give a book gift but don’t know what kind of book to buy,” while a publisher said, “It’s fun! You get curious about the author,” and purchased several birthday books. Currently, you can also find birthday books in other local bookstores in Korea, including Bookshop Lisbon and Librairie de Nuit in Seoul, Joochaekgongsa in Busan, Sasohan Books in Daegu, and 365 Books in Yongin, as well as at the large chain bookstore Youngpoong Bookstore.



IGMU's "birthday books" (Source: IGMU)

## It is only available in our bookstore!

There's a saying that goes, "Don't be number one, be the only one." Here, "only one" refers to something "special" that has no competition or is incomparable, not something that is number one. The publishing industry also has been trying to think of "special" books. One such special book born in 2017 is the "local bookstore edition." For example, *No Longer Human* and *A Journey to Mujin* by Minumsa Publishing under the *Ssonsal Mungo* series, which were distributed only in local bookstores with new covers, sold 4,000 copies each. The Munhakdongne Publishing first introduced the *2010-2017 Winners of the Munhakdongne Young Author Award* as a best-of collection for local bookstores in 2018, and has since been publishing local bookstore editions of short story collections selected by local bookstore owners. Since then, books have been published under the name of local bookstore editions by various publishers. Some

books are actually distributed only in local bookstores, and some are published with a different cover from the large bookstore edition.

At first, some readers would buy two copies of the same book so that they could have a collection of their favorite authors, and local bookstore owners were happy to see new readers coming to their stores. It was also good for publishers because they could sell 2,000 copies by just distributing 10 copies in about 200 bookstores. However, as the number and frequency of releases increased, fatigue set in, and the negative perception that it was nothing more than an advertising tool with a new cover began to grow. Local bookstores were also worried. The number of new readers hasn't increased as much as in the early days. The biggest burden was that many local bookstores sold the same books around the same time, resulting in a lack of differentiation. Readers who mostly visit local bookstores say, "There is less difference in curation between bookstores, making them no different from large bookstores," or "It's quite scary to see the same book posted on every bookstore's Instagram."

As book sales declined around the same time, bookstores sought to differentiate their curation and create their own content to attract readers to their stores. Several local bookstores started collaborating with publishers to make editions with exclusive covers sold in their bookstores only. The idea was to draw in new readers and retain existing ones. One of the most proactive bookstores was Bookplant. It has created more than 40 exclusive

covers since 2020 to send to its book club readers. For Bookplant, which regularly publishes exclusive editions, it also means discovering not only new titles but also books from small and medium-sized publishers and good books that have been swept aside by new releases. In the summer and winter of 2023, Bookplant collaborated with independent bookstores Chaegbang Yeonhui and A Dokbang to produce the *Ayeonsilsaek* (아연실색) Edition of Albert Camus's *Noces suivi de L'Été* and Georges Perec's *L'infra-ordinaire*, and the 500 copies of the limited edition were sold out within two weeks. Recently, the *Ayeonsilsaek Edition* added Yoko Sano's essay as its third book in the series. Large bookstores also often offer exclusive editions. For example, last summer, Kyobo Book Centre released *Noces suivi de L'Été* with a new cover in collaboration with publisher Green Flash Press, and sold out of its 2,000 copies in two months. Similarly, Yes 24 released a re-covered edition of Françoise Sagan's *La Chamade* from the same publisher, selling 1,000 copies in fall 2023 and 1,000 copies in summer 2024.

For publishers, it's an opportunity to reach new readers and diversify their publishing creations. "Sometimes it's frustrating when you have to settle on a single cover for a book. It's because while the cover is supposed to symbolize the tone of the book and appeal to readers, there are some books that evoke multiple images. So, it's nice to have the opportunity to try things on the re-covers that you couldn't do on the first design, while also incorporating the bookstore's unique identity into it," says

the head of Green Flash Press. For bookstores, the benefit of collaboration is that it allows them to offer differentiated content to readers. The reason why I, the founder of independent bookstore Chaegbang Yeonhui, decided to launch a bookstore-exclusive edition was because I wanted to “share my favorite authors with the customers of my bookstore.” All of these efforts seem to be aimed at reaching new readers and staying connected with existing ones.



*L'infra-ordinaire* from the *Ayeonsilsaek Edition* (Source: Green Flash Press)

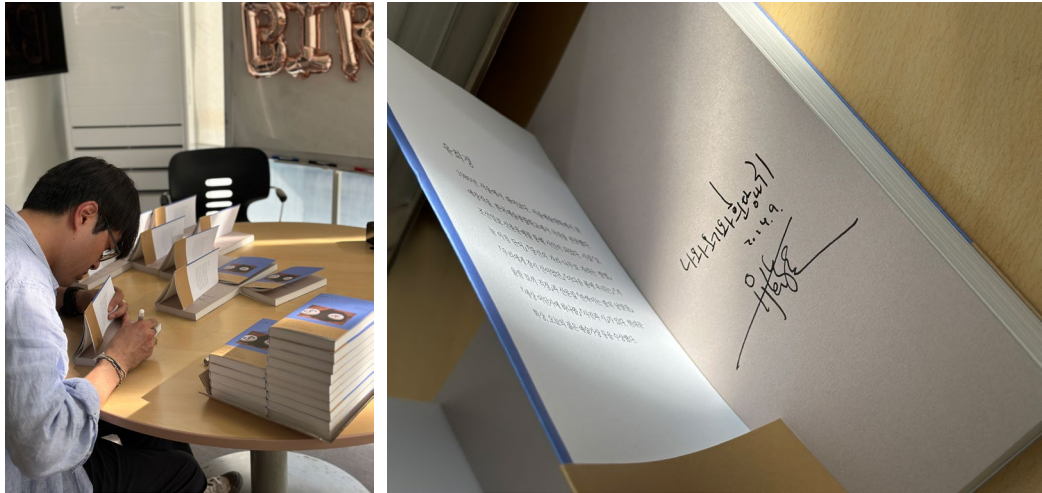
### The author's autograph increases the book's collectible value!

Producing an exclusive cover edition would probably be one of the dreams of any local bookstore owner. However, it's usually not feasible for a local bookstore to produce 500 to 1,000 copies,

due to production costs and distribution issues. That's why a new type of book has emerged to replace it - the author's autographed edition. While people are getting more opportunities to meet their favorite authors with the rise in cultural activities at local bookstores, many are concentrated in Seoul and don't have time to take a break from their busy lives. Though they say readers are connected to authors through books, having a book autographed by the author increases its value. It also feels like the book is read more carefully. This is why readers go to local bookstores to buy signed copies of their favorite authors.

So, some bookstores have started to sell only autographed copies, and many publishers actively distribute autographed copies to local bookstores when a new book is released. In turn, local bookstores aggressively promote and distribute autographed copies. Some publishing companies even start distributing autographed copies to local bookstores or pre-selling them before the publication date. Among the most active publishers is Munhakdongne Publishing, which focuses on Korean literature. An official from Munhakdongne Publishing said, "We have seen good results in terms of promoting new titles and getting them in stock, as it is in line with the needs of local bookstores to differentiate themselves from large online and offline bookstores." Munhakdongne Publishing's *Siinseon* (시인선; meaning 'poetry collection') and Nanda Is Art Publishing's *Siujeokjeol* (시의적절; meaning 'timely' by its original term, but used as a linguistic play to mean 'the right (적절) poems (시)')

series, among others, have been constantly organizing events for every new release to build relationships with local bookstores and their readers.



Autographed copy of *Ogi and I* by Yoo Hee-Kyung, from Nanda Is Art Publishing's *Suijeokjeol* series (Source: Munhakdongne Publishing)

Some are worried that the above phenomena may lead to books becoming a kind of “merchandise.” The concern is that books are being marketed and distributed without consideration for readers’ tastes, preferences, needs, or reading capabilities. However, readers say, “I go to bookstores because I want to have an experience that I can’t have online.” They also add, “It is better if the books are pretty and fun, too.” The same goes for bookstore owners, as they say, “A famous writer once said, books you read are from those you buy. You have to buy the book before you can read it.” That’s true. It is important to make people experience books. Only then will they find the book or a bookstore repeatedly. More frequent experiences will add depth

as well. They will also gain an eye for good books. Furthermore, why shouldn't selling and buying books be done like a playful activity? You never know where a literary experience that starts out as a playful activity will reach.

## SPECIAL PROJECT

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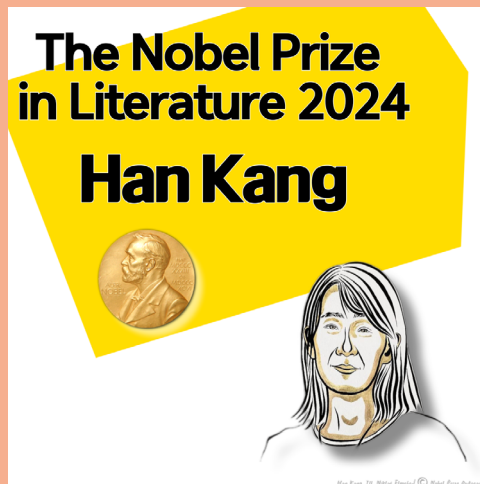
[Award-winning Korean Books ①]

# Literary Awards: A Message of the Times

Major Korean literary award-winning books in 2024

Written by Kim Sheen (Publishing critic)

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Writer Han Kang, who won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2024

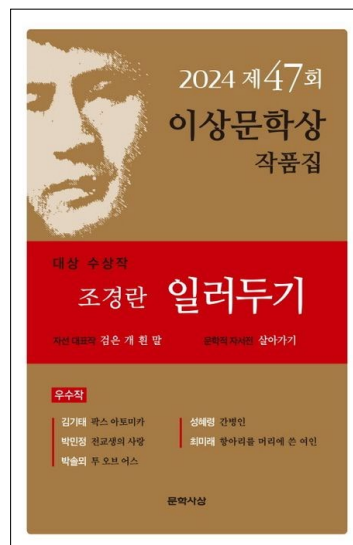
Where does the authority of the Nobel Prize in Literature derive from? Is it the huge prize of 1.3 billion won, or the long history of 124 years? Or is it the exceptional life stories of Alfred Nobel,

the inventor of dynamite? Well, it's probably a combination of all of these elements, but more than that, it's the message that holds the secret to its long-standing authority. The Nobel Prize in Literature has always pointed out exactly what we, as a species, need to think about right now, and where we should be headed together. Each year, hundreds of millions, perhaps billions, of people around the world share the same curiosity when the Prize is announced. They ask themselves, "Why that author? What did he or she write?" The Nobel Prize in Literature draws the world's attention to a single point, like a giant magnifying glass that focuses the sun's light, and sends out the most compelling message at that point in time. From this perspective, this year's Nobel Prize in Literature has sent a message to all of humanity to "stop hatred and genocide and restore peace," by selecting Han Kang.

Literary awards are given to people who have written great works of literature or contributed to the field. The art we call literature is also about capturing the times in language and making it an eternal record. As such, attempts to distinguish the most outstanding achievements in contemporary literature are also a reflection on the spirit of the times in which we live. And so, in this light, let's take a look at the winners of the most prestigious literary awards in Korea for the year 2024.

## The most prestigious literary award in Korea: Yi Sang Literary Award

First is the Yi Sang Literary Award. The Award is the most authoritative literary award recognized by readers in Korea today. Han Kang, the winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature, also won this award in 2005 with *Mongolian Spot*. The judging panel of the 47th award (Kwon Young-Min, Ku Hyo-Seo, Kim Jong-Wook, Yoon Dae-Nyeong, and Jeon Kyung-Rin) chose Jo Kyung-Ran's short story *Preface*, which received the most support among a selection of short- to mid-length novels released in Korea throughout 2023, as the grand prize winner of the 47th Yi Sang Literary Award this year.



The collection of the 47th Yi Sang Literary Award winners in 2024 (Literature & Thought Publishing), containing *Preface*

*Preface* portrays the lives of ordinary people. It tells the story of Jae-Seo, who quits his job after a divorce and runs a copy shop that he took over from his father in a neighborhood on the

outskirts of a big city, and Mi-Yong, who sells side dishes across the street, as they get to know each other and open their hearts. Although they are close in age and frequently bump into each other, Mi-Yong is just “someone you can’t say you don’t know or know well” to Jae-Seo. The local residents, who are mostly indigenous, are also unwilling to open their hearts to Mi-Yong simply because she has no husband or children and lives alone at her age. Then, one day, Jae-Seo reads the notes in the USB that Mi-Yong forgot to take back after printing, and he’s intrigued to learn more about her. Mi-Yong wrote, “I was a person who had lost myself since birth.” The notes reveal Mi-Yong’s past - born as the fourth child to a mother who gave birth to her first child at the age of 18, still underage, she was considered the “cause of her misery” and was forced to be a polite child who didn’t stand out from others. Announcing *Preface* as the grand prize winner, the judges stated the following reasons for their selection.

“While depicting the life of the neighbors living on the fringes of the city, embracing yet struggling with each other, as the backdrop, the author’s view of the protagonist’s changing inner consciousness hidden behind the harsh reality stands out. The scene in which the protagonist, who spoke as if he was seeking revenge by buying a black mask and saying that he needed to find someone, eventually redeems himself by pulling out the scarred, vulnerable childhood hidden inside of him is a testament to the novel’s achievement.”

## Trusted by literary readers: Dong-In Literary Award

The Dong-In Literary Award is also one of Korea's most prestigious literary awards. Now in its 55th year, the Award is trusted by literary readers for its unique and sophisticated way of selecting winners. The Dong-In Literary Award's judging panel (Jung Myeong-Gyo, Ku Hyo-Seo, Lee Seung-Woo, Kim In-Sook, and Kim Dong-Sik) collects recommendations through monthly readings throughout the year, and then selects the year's winner at the end of the year. Since it is organized by *Chosun Ilbo*, it is a unique characteristic and strength that readers can follow the judging process and see how the judges viewed the books at each reading. It allows readers to be interested in multiple works by different authors rather than just one awarded book.

The Dong-In Literary Award chooses its winner from a shortlist of nominees selected from January through September. As of the end of October - when this article is written - the winner has yet to be confirmed, but let's take a look at what books have been considered for the award in 2024.

### Books recommended by the January-September readings in 2024

Month	Title	Author	Publisher
January	<i>Neighboring Fees of the Month</i>	Park Ji-Young	Minumsa
	<i>From the Low Resolution</i>	Seo Ije	Munhakhongne
February	<i>I Will Have the Night</i>	Ahn Bo-Yoon	Munhakhongne
	<i>Seasons Last Short, Memories Last Long</i>	Lee Joo-Hye	Changbi

Month	Title	Author	Publisher
March	<i>The Dispatchers</i>	Kim Cho–Yeop	Publion Books
	<i>The Only One</i>	Choi Jin–Young	Hankyoreh Publishing
April	<i>Rabbit in the Hole</i>	Kim Na–Hyeon	Jaeum&Moeum Publishing
	<i>Going Home</i>	Moon Ji–Hyeok	Moonji Publishing
May	<i>Gold Rush</i>	Seo Su–Jin	Hankyoreh Publishing
	<i>A World Without Bloody Mary</i>	Choi Je–Hoon	Moonji Publishing
June	<i>Discovery of Anyeongsi</i>	Kim Jong–Gwang	My Dear Books
	<i>The Mushroom Farm</i>	Sung Hye–Ryeong	Changbi
July	<i>The International for Two</i>	Kim Ki–Tae	Munhakdongne
	<i>Everything About 247</i>	Kim Hee–Sun	EunHaengNaMu
August	<i>The God of Torn Paper</i>	Djuna	Danbi
	<i>The Retired Robot</i>	Lim Su–Hyeon	Moonhak Soochup
September	<i>Bookstore Narasarang</i>	Kang Jung–Ah	Gang Books
	<i>The Night We Don't Have</i>	Wi Su–Jung	Moonji Publishing

Source: *Chosun Ilbo*

## The historic and prestigious award now in its 69th year: Hyundae Munhak Award

The Hyundae Munhak Award is a long-standing and prestigious literary award, now in its 69th year. This year's winner was Jung Young-Su's *A Piece of the Future*. The judging process was based on works published in each literary magazine issued between December 2022 and November 2023 (between Winter 2022 and Fall 2023 for quarterly magazines). The nominees for the award were Kim Ji-Yeon's *Pet Debt*, Moon Jin-Young's *The Lesser*

*Hammered Nail*, Park Ji-Young's *Funeral on Sale*, Baek On-Yoo's *Rehabilitation*, Lee Joo-Hye's *Fledging Under Process*, Jung Seon-Im's *Us, Later*, and Jung Yong-Joon's *How to Look at the Ocean*.

The winning novel, *A Piece of the Future*, begins as "I," the novel's narrator, suffers through his mother's suicide attempt. The shock is immense because his mother was the most optimistic person he knew. This event leads the narrator to learn about his mother's life. She did not choose her father of her own free will. After giving birth to his older brother, they lived together, and after giving birth to him, she married his father and had to live stuck in this family. Yet, she always dreamed of a future that was free of this family. While taking care of his mother after a failed suicide attempt, the narrator comes across a note that his mother had left for him in the past, in which she wrote about things that never happened: her going to college, her getting a job, her traveling for business, and her traveling the world. Looking at the notes, he thinks that there are "pieces of the future" scattered all around.

Jung Young-Su was born in 1983 in Seoul, Korea, and debuted as a writer with *The Quarterly Changbi* (창작과비평) in 2014. His works include the short story collections *Aficionados* (Changbi) and *Couples of Tomorrow* (Munhakdongne). Novelist Pyun Hye-Young, who judged the final round, wrote about *A Piece of the Future*, "I want to confess that the author's sentences, indifferent yet warm, wistful yet vivid, were a great comfort to me on days of unforeseeable future."



Winners of the 69th Hyundae Munhak Award in 2024 short story collection (Hyundae Munhak) containing *A Piece of the Future* and two other works by Jeong: *Aficionados*; *Couples of Tomorrow*

## Selecting Works that Best Match “Sensibility of the Day”: Today’s Writer Award

The Today’s Writer Award has announced that it will be reformed into a full-length novel contest after Kim Hwa-Jin’s *About Naju* (Munhakdongne) was selected for the 47th Today’s Writer Award in 2023. Minumsa, the organizer of the Award, stated on September 23 that the Award will be returning to its original identity. Founded in 1977, the Today’s Writer Award used to be a full-length novel contest before it was abolished in 2015. Since then, the Award has changed to a reader-voted selection of works published during the year that best fit the “sensibility of the day.” Many of the most promising writers in recent Korean literature, including Ku Byeong-Mo, Jang Gang-Myeong, Bae Soo-Ah, and Kim Cho-Yeop, were introduced to the world through the Award. Submissions for the 48th Today’s Writer Award are open until February 28, 2025. All writers, new or experienced, are eligible

to submit a full-length novel of at least 500 pages of 200-word squared manuscript paper (plus a synopsis within one A4 page). The prize money (advance) is 30 million won, and the winner will be published in Minumsa's *Today's Young Writer* series; the winner is set to be announced next May.

\* *K-Book Trends* Vol. 68 – Go to the interview with writer Kim Hwa-Jin

<https://www.kbook-eng.or.kr/sub/interview.php?ptype=view&idx=1365&page=1&code=interview&category=66>

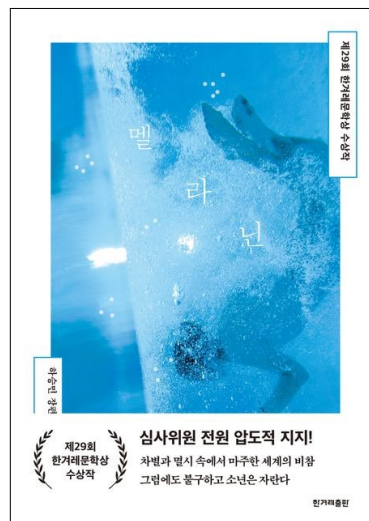


*About Naju*, the winner of the 47th Today's Writer Award in 2023

## Expanding the horizons of Korean literature: Hankyoreh Literary Award

The winner of the 29th Hankyoreh Literary Award in 2024 was Ha Seung-Min's full-length novel, *Melanin* (Hankyoreh Publishing). The protagonist, who was born with "blue melanin," which makes his skin blue, faces discrimination even in the arms of his family. Ha depicts the painstaking process of how the protagonist

regains his dignity as a human being regardless of his skin color. It makes us realize the prejudice and hatred within us. The unique background of Ha Seung-Min, who used to work in the IT and financial industries and started writing full-time in 2020, has also been a center of attention. The story also made headlines for being the only one of the 240 entries to make it to the final round with the full support of all the judges. After extensive debate, the 7 judges chose the story for its “incredible details of immigration history,” “compelling sentences and sophisticated ending,” and “the soulfulness and charm of the main character,” among other reasons. In her review, literary critic Seo Young-In wrote, “*Melanin* is a story about a grand dream; the dream of becoming a new kind of human race without giving up, even if it means death, disappearance, and pain.”



*Melanin*, the winner of the 29th Hankyoreh Literary Award in 2024

## Distinguishing the most outstanding literary achievement: Hankook Ilbo Literary Award

Since the winner of the Hankook Ilbo Literary Award is announced in November each year, expectations are high as to which work will be selected for this year. The winner of the 56th Hankook Ilbo Literary Award in 2023 was Cheon Woon-Young's *Half of a Half of a Half* (Munhakdongne), which is a short story collection about the lives of women from different generations and with different values, but who embrace the world with their own "tenderness." The judges valued it highly for its "thoughtfulness towards writing that recreates the lives of our grandmothers and mothers' generation, reaching a point where it is not possible to recreate and restore someone's life in a documentary format."

Born in Seoul in 1971, Cheon Woon-Young has been prolific since her debut in 2000, writing short story collections *The Needle* (Changbi), *Merry* (Moonji Publishing), *Her Way of Using Tears* (Changbi), and *As Mom Knows* (Moonji Publishing), as well as full-length novels *Goodbye, Circus* (Munhakdongne) and *The Ginger* (Changbi). The Hankook Ilbo Literary Award targets Korean fiction published between September of last year and August of this year, and the judges include writers Eun Hee-Kyoung, Jeon Sung-Tae, and Pyeon Hye-Young; literary critics Jung Hong-Su, Kang Dong-Ho, and Yang Kyeong-Un; and poet Shin Yonng-Mok.

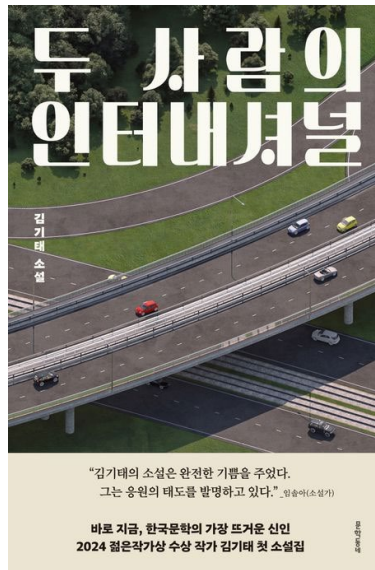


The works of Cheon Woon-Young, the winner of the 56th Hankook Ilbo Literary Award in 2023 – *Half of Half of Half* and three other works by Cheon: *Her Way of Using Tears*; *Goodbye, Circus*; *The Ginger*

## Honoring poet Shin Dong-Yup and supporting literary figures: Shin Dong-Yup Literary Award

The Shin Dong-Yup Literary Award was jointly founded by poet Shin Dong-Yup’s family and Changbi to honor the literary spirit of Shin Dong-Yup (1930-1969), a representative participatory poet of the 1960s who wrote poems such as *Husk and Be Gone*, and to support talented literary figures. The Award judges literary achievements written in Korean in the last two years by writers with 10 years or less of publication experience or a comparable career. In August 2024, Changbi selected Kim Ki-Tae’s short story collection, *The International for Two* (Munhakdongne), for the 42nd Shin Dong-Yup Literary Award in the fiction category. The judges commented that the collection “makes us feel a sense of contemporaneity again through its extraordinary and affectionate view of ordinary individuals as well as its meticulous composition.”

\* *K-Book Trends* Vol. 74 – Go to the interview with writer Kim Ki-Tae  
<https://www.kbook-eng.or.kr/sub/interview.php?ptype=view&idx=1461&page=1&code=interview&category=66>



*The International for Two*

## Discovering talented Korean writers: Munhakdongne Novel Award

Presented by Munhakdongne with the aim of discovering talented Korean writers, the Munhakdongne Novel Award has been responsible for discovering some of the key figures in Korean literature. Previous winners of the Munhakdongne Novel Award include Eun Hee-Kyoung’s *A Bird’s Gift* (Munhakdongne), Cheon Myeong-Kwan’s *Whale* (Munhakdongne), which was shortlisted for the UK’s International Booker Prize last year, Kim Un-Su’s *The Cabinet* (Munhakdongne), and Cho Nam-Joo’s *When You Listen* (Munhakdongne). The Award, now in its 29th year, selected Kim Hong’s full-length novel *Price King!!!* (Munhakdongne) as the winner. The judging panel of the Award commented, “The novel’s incredible immersive power and witty use of humor brought us back to being sheer, genuine readers,

and we were all in agreement that it should be the winner.” Kim Hong began his career in 2017 through *Dong-A Ilbo*’s Spring Literary Contest. He wrote the short story collection, *We Will Find You* (Munhakdongne), and the full-length novels, *Smoking Oreo* (Jaum&Moeum) and *Ung-ung* (Minumsa).



The winner of the 29th Munhakdongne Novel Award in 2024 – *Price King!!!*; and other works by Kim: *We Will Find You*; *Smoking Oreo*; *Ung-ung*

## Bringing a year of Korean literature to a close every fall: Kim Seung-Ok Literary Award

The Kim Seung-Ok Literary Award was established in 2013 to honor the literary and creative spirit of Kim Seung-Ok, a writer who reached the remarkable pinnacle of Korean contemporary fiction in the 1960s, in commemoration of his 50th year of writing. It has been organized by Munhakdongne with the support of Suncheon-si since 2019. A total of 165 fiction pieces published in 27 literary journals from July 2023 to June 2024 were eligible for the contest. Among them, the judging committee of the 2024 Kim Seung-Ok Literary Award selected *Them* by Jo Kyung-Ran. Jo Kyung-Ran debuted in *Dong-A Ilbo*’s Spring

Literary Contest in 1996 with her short story *French Optical*, and has since won numerous prominent literary awards, such as the Munhakdongne Writer Award, Today's Young Artist Award, Hyundai Munhak Award, Dong-In Literary Award, and Yi Sang Literary Award. In addition to Jo Kyung-Ran's grand prize-winning work, Kang Tae-Sik's *Still Tonight*, Ban Su-Yeon's *The Fragments*, Shin Yong-Mok's *Shepherds' Cooperative*, Ahn Bo-Yoon's *Regular Meeting on That Day*, Lee Seung-Eun's *The Pieces*, and Cho Hae-Jin's *Dear Tomorrow's Songi* were selected as excellent works.



*The story collection of the winners of the 2024 Kim Seung-Ok Literary Award (Munhakdongne)*

## Contributing to the advancement of Korean literature: Lee Hyo-Seok Literary Award

The Lee Hyo-Seok Literary Award was established in 2000 in honor of the life and literary spirit of Gasan (可山) Lee Hyo-Seok

(1907-1942), the author of *When Buckwheat Flowers Bloom*, who is considered one of the prime spirits of Korean modern and contemporary literature. The judging committee of the Lee Hyo-Seok Literary Award selected 16 preliminary entries by recommending 3-4 outstanding short stories published in literary magazines and webzines over the past year, which were then reviewed intensively for a month. The characteristics of the works examined by the 5 judges included the prominence of young writers in the 2000s, the universality of themes that cross eras, creative subjects, and writing style. Based on these criteria, Moon Ji-Hyeok's *Hurricane Night*, Seo Jang-Won's *Little Pride*, Sung Hae-Na's *Honmono*, Son Bo-Mi's *Endless Night*, Ahn Yoon's *Dam-dam*, and Ye So-Yeon's *The Dog and the Revolution* were selected to compete in the final round.

\* *K-Book Trends* Vol. 75 – Go to the article about the Lee Hyo-Seok Memorial Hall  
<https://www.kbook-eng.or.kr/sub/trend.php?ptype=view&idx=1477&page=1&ode=trend&category=63>

Son Bo-Mi's work was selected as the grand prize winner of the 25th Lee Hyo-Seok Literary Award. The winning story, *Endless Night*, is a short story that describes the protagonist's experiences and thoughts following a night when a cruising yacht rocked and turned over. The judges commented, "It has an undeniably compelling novelistic tension," and added that it stood out for the way it "tenaciously traces a fractured, seemingly sinking truth in a dizzy world." Son Bo-Mi has written the short story collections, *A Lindy Hop for Them* (Munhakdongne), and *An Elegant Night*

and *Cats* (Moonji Publishing), and the full-length novels *Dear Ralph Lauren* (Munhakdongne), *Small Neighborhood* (Moonji Publishing), and *Children of Disappeared Forest* (Anonbooks), and has won numerous awards, including the Daesan Literary Award, the Yi Sang Literary Award, and grand prize in the Young Writer's Award.

\* *K-Book Trends Vol. 58* – Go to the interview with writer Son Bo-Mi

<https://www.kbook-eng.or.kr/sub/interview.php?ptype=view&idx=1187&page=1&code=interview&category=66>



*A Lindy Hop for Them; Small Neighborhood; Children of Disappeared Forest*

**EXPORT CASE**

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# Globalizing Korean Literature: The Journey of Kim Hye-jin and Her Works

Written by Marina Penalva (Literary agent, Casanovas & Lynch Literary Agency)

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I am writing this a day after Han Kang received the Nobel Prize in Literature “for her intense poetic prose that confronts historical traumas and exposes the fragility of human life.” The first in history for a writer from South Korea. It is, without a doubt, a huge milestone for South Korean literature and a debt that was long overdue. Some may even feel that this is the ultimate goal for the internationalization of Korean literature.

Korea has an incredibly rich and diverse literary culture that has conquered the world in recent years, and I feel that this is an interesting moment to stop and think about how authors and authorships are managed. The most important ‘ingredients’, which are talent and key resources such as translators, grants, and promotion programs, are already there. The support

is truly impressive. But how can we best promote a writer internationally, their whole body of work, and their literary universe, instead of just one book? Should we talk less about titles and more about writers?

Author representation is very different from one country to another, from one culture to another. As a literary agent, my experience working with authors directly has always involved trying to understand where the authors are coming from and where they might be going. This helps me suggest a strategy and offer some guidance and advice. To me, it is important to talk with authors and choose which books to begin with and why. Or which titles are most interesting to follow-up with after a so-called publishing success or a so-called failure. Or *when, how,* and *who* to entrust the translation to. Sometimes, the titles that work domestically do not work internationally, and it makes more sense to promote a backlist work. It is a job that requires patience, perseverance, and the opportunity of good timing.

My experience working with Kim Hye-jin is an interesting example. I came across *Concerning My Daughter* (Minumsa) thanks to Michelle Nam, rights manager at Minumsa, who kindly sent me a partial translation. I was very slow to read it, but when I finally found the time to read a full translation, it blew my mind. How could a mother be so cold-hearted? How could I hate this character so much in the first half of the novel and then feel so much compassion for her at the end? How did the author accomplish this and create this feeling?

My initial efforts to spread the word about *Concerning My Daughter* were unsuccessful but, after a few months, I finally found an editor who felt the same as I did, and the French rights were sold to Gallimard. Gradually, a group of publishing houses came together to champion this special novel, and more translation deals were closed in Italy (Mondadori), the UK (Picador), the US (Restless), Germany (Hanser), Spain (Las Afueras), Argentina, Poland, Greece, etc. - up to 15 publishers in total.



*Concerning My Daughter* (covers of the Italian, U.S., Spanish ver.)

*Concerning My Daughter* was not a “hot” novel, nor a brand new release - it had been published many years before - and not a massive bestseller in South Korea either. But it was a small gem that, without Michelle’s insistence, could have remained unnoticed. Thanks to a series of personal and professional links and a few years of waiting, the novel began to be read around the world, and Kim Hye-jin traveled to Austria and Berlin to promote it. We finally met in person in Seoul, and we established a close

connection and a bond of friendship and trust. This extended to her brilliant English translator, Jamie Chang, who, together with Michelle Nam, completed the quartet. We shared and discussed decisions about publishing houses, promotions, interviews, and travel invitations. Hye-jin's English kept getting better and better while my Korean remained nonexistent. We talked at length about her many brilliant books and agreed that *The Good Ear (Counsel Culture)*(Minumsa) was the best possible follow-up to *Concerning My Daughter*. Together we carefully prepared all the materials for publishers. All the foreign publishers except for a couple bought the rights to *Counsel Culture* and are fully committed to Kim Hye-jin as an author beyond just one book. To me, this means a lot, as the big challenge for a writer in translation is continuity, and to have more than just one book translated. For *Counsel Culture*, Kim Hye-jin traveled to Spain and, in the meantime, the film adaptation of *Concerning My Daughter* premiered to great critical acclaim in Seoul.



*Counsel Culture* (covers of the U.S., Korean ver.)



The film poster for *Concerning My Daughter*

Now, while I continue to promote these two novels in countries and languages where they are not yet available, the quartet is discussing what would be the ideal third title for foreign readers. Short stories? Another novel? While in Korea, the short story is extremely popular, it remains a slightly more risky format in translation and it is important to think about when and how short stories might work. My feeling is that it is not the right moment yet and that it would be good to have at least one more novel translated before presenting short stories. How about Kim Hye-jin's backlist novel, *THE WORK OF NUMBER 9*? Or maybe we should wait until she finishes the book that she is currently working on?



*THE WORK OF NUMBER 9* (cover of the Korean ver.)

Kim Hye-jin's lead publishing house in English used to be Picador in the UK, but since the editor left, Restless Books in the US has taken the lead. Does this mean that perhaps we should be thinking more about North American readers than before? And how will the books be received in the US? And, while we wait for a new book, what about placing one of her stories in a literary magazine? This ongoing conversation is one of the many different aspects and joys of promoting international literature. In a completely globalized and crowded market, which can also sometimes feel a bit overwhelming, asking is this the best book? and is this the best moment? and is this the best way? is always a good idea.

## BOOK TRIP

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[A Trip to Literary Museums ⑦]

# Where Poetry and History Meet

Exploring the Kim Su-Young Museum and Cultural Legacy in Dobong-gu, Seoul

Written by Kim Young-lhm

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A place that's just ordinary for some can be a magnificent destination for others, inspiring memories and recharging the soul. Seoul, the capital of Korea, is a prime example of this duality. With the growing popularity of K-culture in various aspects, more travelers are visiting Seoul; however, if you make a trip slightly outside the center of Seoul to Dobong-gu, you will find a different Seoul with a more tranquil atmosphere. Surrounded by Bukhansan Mountain, Dobong-gu is a district where you can take a walk around the trail or hike up the mountain. There are also many areas where you can look down the mountain, get a glimpse of the cultural powerhouse that is Korea, and be touched and impressed. If you walk down the

narrow alleyways of Dobong-gu, which add to the curiosity and fun of discovering hidden spaces, you will be greeted by a literature museum commemorating Kim Su-Young, a poet who led Korea's modern and contemporary literature.

**A tribute to a poet who sparked a passion for literature:  
Kim Su-Young Museum**



Outside view of Kim Su-Young Museum

Kim Su-Young, one of Koreans' favorite poets, died at the young age of 48, but left behind many poems during his relatively short life. The time he felt and suffered from the chaos and turbulence of modern Korea would have been reflected in his poems. For

this reason, Kim is regarded as a poet who used critical and philosophical poems to express the situation of the times. Kim, who initially showed modernist tendencies, began to capture an intense sense of reality with the April Revolution (also called the “April 19 Revolution”)\* serving as a turning point. He advocated a “whole-body” poetics (“Poetry is about pushing forward with your whole body, your whole self” - from *Poem, Spit Up* (시여 침을 뱉어라)) that seeks to create a new world beyond the past and present by addressing the self-awakening of petit bourgeois, the honest agony of intellectuals, and the protest against the suppression of freedom, often in a confessional and straightforward tone. For this reason, he is remembered as a poet who wrote fiercely with his whole self.

\* April Revolution: A democratic uprising by students and citizens against the corruption of the government on April 19, 1960.



A plaque of the Kim Su-Young Literary Award, the poet’s bust, and a chronicle of poet Kim Su-Young

Although poet Kim Su-Young was born in Jongno-gu, Seoul, he lived and wrote poetry in Dobong-gu, making Dobong-gu the birthplace of his poetry. As his house and graveyard are also

located in Dobong-gu, the Kim Su-Young Museum (You can search for “Kim Suyeong Literature Hall” on Google Maps.) was opened in 2013 to commemorate the poet’s life. Consisting of four floors, it is a cultural complex centered around one writer, Kim Su-Young. The first and second floors exhibit Kim Su-Young’s works, biography, and belongings that provide an in-depth look into the world of his poetry; the third floor is used as an auditorium where various studies, lectures, and seminars are held based on Kim Su-Young’s poetry; and the fourth floor is the Kim Su-Young Literature Library, where anyone is free to visit to read books. Lastly, the rooftop garden offers a panoramic view of Bukhansan Mountain, boasting a spectacular mountainscape - a fitting end to the time spent with the poet.



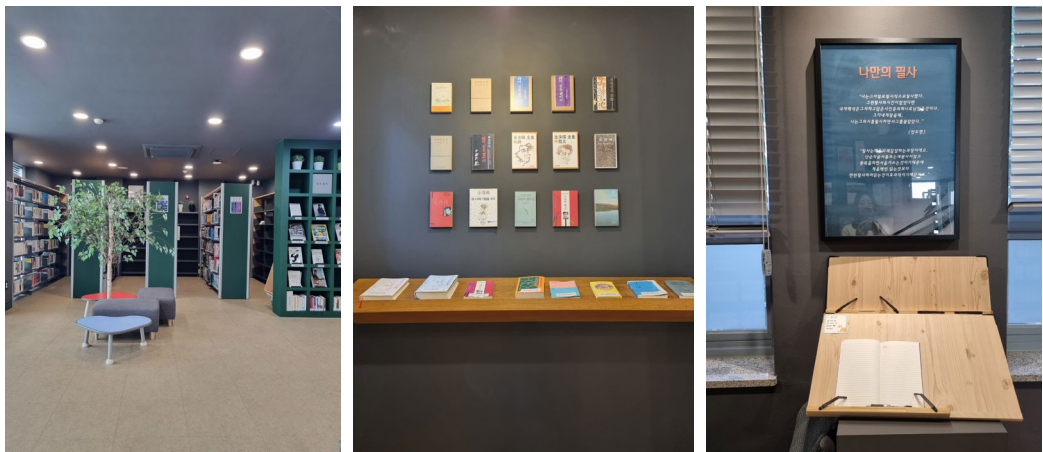
Exhibits featuring the works and biography of poet Kim Su-Young and his restored workshop

Since Kim Su-Young has left behind a wide range of works, the museum is designed to immerse visitors in his works more than anything else. In the exhibition room, you can follow the trajectory of the poet's life organized in chronological order, so that you can have an indirect experience of how he lived through the turbulent modern history of Korea, including the Korean War, the April Revolution, and the May 16 Coup\*. Also, as the poet's handwritten manuscripts are available to view, the poems are delivered deeply to the heart. In addition, you can not only enjoy the poet's figure and his language through various videos, but also feel the breath of the poet in the "Poet's Study (시인의 서재)," where you can see the dining table where he wrote his manuscripts and his favored books up close. Plus, the "Reading Stand (독서대)," which features Kim's works, including poetry and prose collections, as well as books and papers related to him, offers visitors the pleasure of stopping for a moment to read.

\* May 16 Coup: A military coup on May 16, 1961, in which a group of soldiers physically overthrew the then-present government and seized power.

Going up to the third floor after looking around the exhibition area, you will find the Kim Su-Young Literature Library. This library, which houses various types of books on top of Kim's works, is open to the public, and anyone can take a seat and read books. Though it might not be spacious, the time reading books here in silence, reflecting on the impressions and emotions you had at the museum, will help you appreciate the deeper scents of literature. This is another pride and charm of the place,

organizing both the museum and the library. Last but not least, if you want to further enhance the special literary impressions of your time at the museum with the natural landscape, the rooftop garden is the perfect spot, where you can take in the serene surroundings. Despite the long gap in time, the view of Bukhansan Mountain that Kim Su-Young must have come across, and the village that still retains its quaint atmosphere, is a pleasant way to end your visit to the museum.



Kim Su-Young Literature Library inside the Kim Su-Young Museum, works on display, and a transcribing space

## The dignified home of a guardian of cultural artworks: Kansong House

Just a short walk from the Kim Su-Young Museum is a place where you can meet someone who has made a cultural impact as big as Kim Su-Young. They say that turbulence gives birth to heroes. However, heroes are not only born on battlegrounds. Heroes are created in various fields as they gather their passion

and will to accomplish certain things. One such person was Kansong (澗松) Jeon Hyeong-Pil, who fought for independence in his own way by protecting cultural artworks during the Japanese occupation of Korea. He was an educator and collector of Korea's cultural heritage, preventing valuable artifacts from falling into the hands of the Japanese. Known as one of the richest men of his time, he used much of his wealth to buy cultural artifacts that were about to be taken to Japan or to retrieve those that had already been taken. He was literally a man of noblesse oblige. He also built *Bohwagak* (葆華閣, meaning “house of luminous treasures”), the predecessor of Korea's first modern private museum, the Kansong Art Museum; his house is located in Dobong-gu as well.



Kansong House was built in commemoration of Kansong, the guardian of Korea's cultural artworks

Jeon Hyeong-Pil's house, also known as Kansong House, is a century-old *hanok*, full of elegance. Though parts of the gate, fence, and building were left damaged after the end of the

Korean War, the house was partially repaired using materials saved from the demolition of the family's main house in Jongno after Kansong's passing in 1962. Kansong House, which holds significant cultural significance, was listed as a National Registered Cultural Heritage in 2012 and was restored and opened to the public in 2015 by Dobong-gu and Kansong Art & Culture Foundation. Behind the simple yet sophisticated Kansong House is the graveyard of Kansong, which cannot be accessed; it's a fitting place to honor Kansong's contribution to defending Korea's cultural and artistic pride.



*Hanok's* unique ambiance and Kansong's refined elegance can be felt in every corner of the house

### **Wondangsaem Park and the Tomb of King Yeonsangun, which have coexisted with people's lives for generations**

A couple of great places to visit while traveling in Dobong-gu are Wondangsaem Park and the Tomb of King Yeonsangun. These two sites are not only right next door to each other, but also adjacent to Kim Su-Young Museum. Wondangsaem Park is

home to a small spring called Wondangsaem, after which the neighborhood was once known as Wondang Village. The spring has provided much-needed water to the people for hundreds of years. Today, the spring has been restored to a traditional pond by piping in groundwater to keep it flowing, and it has been transformed into a park where anyone can come and relax. It is here that we can see that with the right environment, a space can become a place of relaxation that quietly blends into people's lives over time.



Wondangsaem Park and the ginkgo trees that have stood the test of time with its residents

Wondangsaem Park houses the traditional pond Wondangsaem, Samojeong, a pavilion where you can enjoy the view of the pond, and over 13,000 trees that provide a cozy shelter. The park is at its most beautiful in the fall. There is a very large

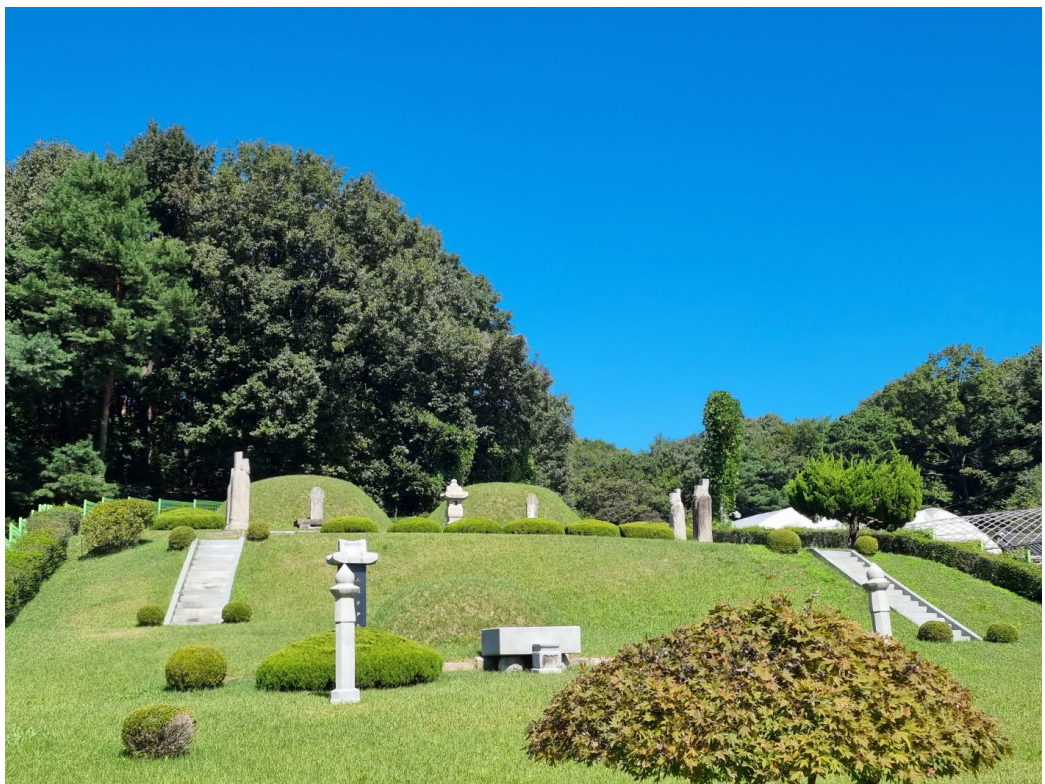
ginkgo tree designated as a Monument of the Seoul Metropolitan Government in Wondangsaem Park, which is over 800 years old, where you can marvel at its yellow leaves. As the entire park is designed to provide eco-friendly landscapes, it also has a walking trail perfect for contemplative strolls. You can also find the Wondang Village Hanok Library connected to the park, where you can enjoy reading a book after a leisurely break.



Wondang Village *Hanok* Library, connected to Wondangsaem Park

Since you have come this far, it's worth visiting the Tomb of King Yeonsangun, located at the entrance to Wondangsaem Park. Yeonsangun was the son of King Sungjong, the 9th king of Joseon, whose accomplishments during his reign included relieving the impoverished and renovating Jongmyo; however, he was deposed for tyranny after learning of the death of his mother, Deposed Queen Yun. He was exiled to Ganghwado,

where he died and was buried, but at the request of his wife, Shin, the tomb was moved to its current location. Although the tomb is not lavishly decorated like other royal tombs, it preserves the traditional tomb style, allowing visitors to get a glimpse into Yeonsangun, who once lived as a king.



Tomb of King Yeonsangun

Although the landmarks of Dobong-gu, including the Kim Su-Young Museum, can be toured in as little as a single day, the impressions they leave are as majestic as the stems of Bukhansan Mountain that surround them. In Dobong-gu, there is one who left their mark in the form of poetry - in the fierce struggle with literature, while another has recorded the traces of a socially

responsible life as a member of a prestigious family. And now, the spaces they left behind continue to present special memories to those who come to visit.

## ONE-LINER QUOTES

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# Women Who Protected the Korean Empire

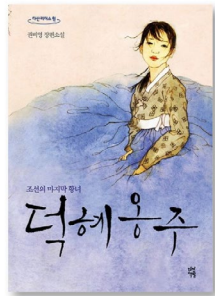
An Imperial Descendant of the Korean Empire's Pick

Written by Crown Prince Lee Won (Chair of the Dae Han Imperial House)

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Lee Won is the crown prince and the descendant of the imperial family of the Korean Empire. He is currently the chair of the Dae Han Imperial House, continuing the royal legacy of the Joseon Kingdom and the Empire of Korea.

I would like to recommend two novels that focus on the hardships and adversity of people who lived through the history of the Korean Empire. The stories in these novels vividly depict tragic but resilient lives, and remind us of the stories of our ancestors who endured suffering throughout history.



*Princess Deokhye*  
Kwon Bee-Young, Dasan Books



I was born the last princess of the Korean Empire,  
but in the end, I was a sinner  
who failed to protect my country.

First off, Kwon Bee-Young's novel *Princess Deokhye* (Dasan Books) has a special meaning to me. The protagonist of the novel, Princess Deokhye, is the last princess of the Korean Empire and my great-aunt. She was born into the imperial family of the Korean Empire as the youngest daughter of Emperor Gojong, but was forced to live a lonely and tragic life in Japan after the loss of her country. The novel conveys Princess Deokhye's deep sorrow and agony at not being able to protect her country. I, too, as a royal descendant of the Korean imperial family, cannot help but feel her pain in my heart. Through the life of the princess, we will have to revisit the pain of the imperial family and the people who lost their country and the hope that blossomed within them.

“I also had a beautiful garden, dear mother, benevolent father. There was a time when I was happy, strolling through the garden where beautiful flowers bloomed. There was also a lovely juniper tree. Before I met you, I too was unenviably happy. Though I have left that beautiful

land, I will not forget it. Neither will I forget the bitterness of a fallen nation. I will also never lose the dignity of being the princess of Joseon.”

- from *Princess Deokhye*



*Ha Ran-Sa*

Kwon Bee-Young, Special Books

Although we are living at the end of an era, our battles will mark the beginning of its transformation.



The novel *Ha Ran-Sa* (Special Books) follows the life of Ha Ran-Sa, a woman who was an independent activist during the time of the Korean Empire. She was born Kim Ran-Sa (金蘭史) and became known as Ha Ran-Sa (河蘭史) after her husband's surname. She studied in Japan and the US, and was the first Korean to earn a bachelor's degree in the US - showing her exceptional passion for education.

The book *Ha Ran-Sa* tells the story of her life, from how the woman born Kim Ran-Sa came to have the name Ha Ran-Sa, to her time studying in the US, to her activities after meeting King Uichin (also known as Yi Kang), the imperial prince of the Korean Empire. Through her dedication to women's education and independence, and her commitment to her country,

we are reminded of the sacrifices and dedication of women independence fighters of the time.

“My life is mine. I live as I think. It is where my heart is. To reclaim my lost country, I would gladly be a mere grain of wheat!”

- from *Ha Ran-Sa*

Both works above portray the stories of two women who fought through the crisis facing the Korean Empire. They sacrificed themselves for their country in their own way, and their lives are a great lesson for us today. Although they faced tragic fates in the midst of a miserable history, their noble hearts and strong spirits for the country still continue to give us many lessons.

And recently, British journalist Daniel Tudor’s novel *The Last Kingdom* (Gimm-Young Publishers) was published. The book, based on my grandfather, King Uichin (Yi Kang), delicately depicts the historical wounds suffered by the Korean Empire and imperial family, as well as the hope that blossomed in the midst of them. The section about the last period of the Korean Empire was particularly meaningful to me as a crown prince and descendant of the imperial family. The stories of our ancestors who fought to the end to protect the country and their aspirations for a free and peaceful country are deeply embedded in this novel. This makes us realize that history is not just a record of the past, but something that has a deep impact on our lives today.

I am confident that the two novels recommended above, as well as *The Last Kingdom*, will resonate with you as well. And, I hope that more people will deepen their understanding of the history of the Korean Empire and the lives of the people who lived through it, and remember their sacrifices through these novels. This is because history is not just a record of the past, but has a profound impact on our lives today, and we exist only through history.

## KNOWLEDGE

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# Write the Story You Want to Read

**Self-publishing platforms in Korea:  
The reasons for growth and the current state**

Written by Park Su-Ho (BOOKK Business Division Director)

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How self-publishing has taken off in Korea



The emergence of various self-publishing platforms



People attempting to write bestsellers through self-publishing

“If there’s a book that you want to read, but it hasn’t been written yet, then you must write it.” - Toni Morrison, winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1993

While there is no established academic definition, “self-publishing” refers to authors planning, editing, publishing, and distributing their own manuscripts without working through a publishing company. As opposed to “vanity publishing,” which involves paying an upfront fee to a publisher to produce and distribute a book, it is used almost interchangeably with “independent publishing” in Korea (some researchers and book critics use the two terms separately). The desire to document one’s story in writing is an ancient and fundamental desire that has existed since the moment humans invented letters. However, in the modern world, most publishers are private companies that are run for profit. Hence, one of the most important factors in deciding which manuscripts to publish is commercial viability (traditional publishing). So, self-publishing is a kind of “phenomenon” that has emerged because traditional publishing hasn’t been able to capture the demand for people wanting to write their own stories. There are three main reasons why this phenomenon has accelerated, or in other words, why self-publishing has become more popular and the market pie has gotten bigger.

### **Why self-publishing gained popularity in Korea**

First of all, independence and uniqueness. Through self-publishing, you can publish your manuscript without anyone’s interference or engagement. Even if the story doesn’t have much

meaning or interest to others, or even if it has meaning but is not likely to sell, there is no barrier with self-publishing. Self-publishing makes the saying, “If you write half the story of your life, you get a novel,” a reality. It also has to do with the fact that people don’t want to be put in a situation where they have to go through the frustration of having their manuscripts revised, evaluated, and criticized by professionals (publishing editors) when they are not trying to become full-time writers or make a lot of money from writing books. The fact that retired seniors and Gen Z are the two main pillars of self-publishing tells us many things.

Second is affordability. For vanity publishing, it is said to cost anywhere from 3 to 5 million won, though it depends on the circumstances. It might be manageable for some people, but for most people, it is too much. Plus, if the book doesn’t sell well, it can quickly become a sunk cost. On the other hand, self-publishing “theoretically” costs very little to publish. Being able to publish your own book without burning a hole in your pocket is, therefore, a very strong selling point.

Third, the emergence of “self-publishing platforms.” These platforms helped publishing become “affordable” in the first place. They either take over or help with other areas of publishing besides writing the manuscript. You can easily take care of the “trickier” tasks, such as designing the cover and inside layout, getting an ISBN, registering with bookstores, and distribution. Furthermore, these platforms maximize

affordability by offering zero upfront publishing costs through a so-called POD (publish on demand) system, where books are produced when orders are placed. The slogans of “BOOKK,” a leading self-publishing platform in Korea, are “zero upfront” and “become an author in 5 minutes.”

### Various self-publishing platforms and future outlooks

Some of the self-publishing platforms currently used by many authors are “BOOKK (북크크),” “Barochulpan POD (바로출판 POD),” “Upaper (유페이퍼),” and “Jakkawa (작가와).” Established in 2014, BOOKK is the first and currently the largest self-publishing platform in Korea. To date, about 36,000 titles have been published through BOOKK, and 31,000 authors were born. The biggest advantage of BOOKK is that it covers e-books as well as paper books, and the “Make Your Book” process, which has been developed through 10 years of experience, is very user-friendly and stable. Also, besides having its own website, it is available in major Korean online bookstores such as Yes 24, Kyobo Book Center, and Aladin, and its “Service for Authors” menu for members having difficulty making covers and interior pages is also well liked.

Barochulpan POD is an in-bookstore self-publishing platform run by Kyobo Book Center. It stands out for its fast release and variety of book options (binding method, paper types, etc.), with books produced in the bookstore’s own facilities. It has a relatively

large focus on professional publishing, such as dissertations and academic books. Next, Upaper and Jakkawa are ebook-based self-publishing platforms. Upaper has the largest collection of e-books, and its greatest feature is that you can use its web editor to create EPUB files, the standard e-book format. Likewise, Jakkawa, which launched in 2018, specializes in detailed practical books, and is known for hosting writing classes.



*Tomato Cup Noodles and Newsletter for Homeroom Teachers*

As of August 2024, the self-publishing market in Korea has grown by about 128% compared to 2020, the first year of COVID-19 in Korea (refer to the article published on September 4, 2024 in *Chosun Ilbo* ([https://www.chosun.com/culture-life/culture\\_general/2024/09/04/PPYSGG6QZFCSHCOE25Z5N2F6PM/](https://www.chosun.com/culture-life/culture_general/2024/09/04/PPYSGG6QZFCSHCOE25Z5N2F6PM/))), and this growth is expected to continue. The biggest self-publishing hit in Korea this year was *Tomato Cup Noodles*, a poetry collection published by BOOKK. Written by Cha Jung-Eun, who is currently in her third year of high school, the book

has sold 15,000 copies, including POD and recovered versions, and is holding the number one spot on the bestseller list for poetry on major online bookstores such as Yes 24. Cha chose to self-publish because she “thought that other publishers would intervene in various parts of the book, from the cover to the manuscript, even though it is a work that she wants to publish.”

*The Newsletter for Homeroom Teachers*, published by Jakkawa, is also a standout. Published exclusively as an e-book, the book is a kind of an “encyclopedia of classroom management” in which 14 teachers respond to the concerns of their colleagues who have difficulties working as homeroom teachers and summarize what they need to know about homeroom management based on their experiences. The small but clear target audience of “teachers” and the detailed topic of “classroom management” are all the benefits of self-publishing. As more people want to “write the books they want to read,” it won’t be long before there are bestsellers that started out as self-published books, including novels, essays, humanities books, and test preparation books, in addition to poetry.

## KOREAN PUBLISHERS

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### Hyehwa1117

One-woman publishing company that makes books with a distinctive identity



Logo of Hyehwa1117

When something you love and are good at is fused with like-minded people, it can create a massive butterfly effect. This is the case with Hyehwa1117, a one-woman publishing house that, despite its small size, is making a meaningful impact on the Korean publishing industry. Founded by Lee Hyun-Hwa, who

has had a long-standing dream of publishing, Hyehwa1117 has been making books and building up a connection over time after an encounter with a *hanok* built a long time ago. We are looking forward to seeing what Hyehwa1117 will achieve in the publishing industry in the future, as it says that its books are not the “product of any plan, but the result of making connections.”

It's a pleasure to have you with us on *K-Book Trends*. Please introduce Hyehwa1117 to our international readers along with the meaning of the company's name.

Hello, everyone. Hyehwa1117 is a publishing house in Hyehwa-dong, Jongno-gu, Seoul, that was born out of a personal connection with an old *hanok* built in 1936. To capture the meaning of that connection, I named the company by combining the name of the neighborhood and the number of the address. I also liked the word “*hyehwa*” for its Korean pronunciation and the beautiful shape of the letters.

You said you were inspired to start a publishing company as you bought and renovated an old *hanok*. What was the connection between renovating the *hanok* and starting a publishing company?

Working as an editor since 1994, I started to plan my retirement around 2008. One of the things I thought about then was opening a bookstore. My dream was to save money, find a small space in

the next 10 years, and open a bookstore there. After searching for a good neighborhood in which to open a bookstore, I stumbled upon an old *hanok* deep in an alley in 2017, and I fell in love with it at first sight. But, it wasn't the right kind of place for a bookstore. So, it was kind of spontaneous, but I thought, "I could renovate this place and start a publishing house." That's how it started. I had been dreaming of opening a bookstore for a very long time, but after meeting this house, I unexpectedly became a publisher. I launched a publishing house in 2018 thinking, "It's really hard to predict the future" - and I still think so even today.



Before and after the renovation of the hanok, the birthplace of HyeHwa1117

And that *hanok* was introduced in *It's Becoming My Home*. Could you please introduce us to the book?

Fixing up a very old house meant something special to me. I thought, “Living in a house that’s been in the same place for more than 80 years is like continuing one’s life by adding to the invisible time that’s accumulated in that space.” I also thought, “Maybe this house truly becomes my home through living in and with it, not just by paying for it.” I kept a written and photographic record of the process - from my first encounter with the house to fixing it up and moving out - because I wanted to preserve the moments when the house crossed time from before I lived there to after. I wrote the text, and photographer Hwang Woo-Seob, who is also my longtime friend, captured the important moments of fixing up the house as if he were filming a documentary.



*It's Becoming My Home*

Another reason for the book is that I wanted to share with readers the idea that a house is not just an item to be bought and sold, but a space that forms an organic relationship with the lives of the people who live there.

Hyehwa1117 has been publishing an extensive collection of books in the arts, culture, and history connecting them to Korean cultural elements. Is there a particular reason for such focus?

Rather than having a specific reason, I think it was something that came as a result of connections. While working as an editor, I was able to make new books with authors I was close to, and as those books received a lot of love from readers, I continued to make the following books of the same authors. And, as I kept making books in the same field, I got to make new connections with other authors who were publishing books in similar fields, which led me to make more and more books in the same field. Hyehwa1117's list of published books is not the result of any plan, but rather the result of many relationships.

You are an editor, a writer, and a one-woman publisher. It's like having 3 different jobs at once. What are some of the challenges and perks of running a one-woman publishing house?

Well, I can use my time freely, don't have to work with people I don't like, and can take control of everything from start to finish

– there are more advantages than disadvantages. There might be some disadvantages that you would normally think of, like “what will the future of publishing be like,” or “it’s lonely working alone,” but those are the kinds of worries that you have to live with anyway even when you are working at an office, so I wouldn’t say that they are particularly the bad parts of running a one-person publishing house. But, one thing is for sure – if anyone asks me whether I would go back to working for a company, I would immediately say “NO” even before the question ends.

You have recently organized a group of one-woman publishers (Park Sook-Hee - head of Memento Publishing, Choi Ji-Young - head of Editorial Publishing, Park Hee-Sun - head of Kinds Book, and Jeon Eun-Jung - head of Moksu Books) under the name of “Publishing Sisters,” and have been exhibiting the possibility of “publishing solidarity” in the Korean publishing market through various activities. How did you start the group, and what kind of activities are you doing?

I have long known the people in the group “Publishing Sisters.” We hadn’t been able to see each other for a long time due to COVID-19, but when social distancing eased up a bit, we decided to organize a once-a-month gathering that walks around Seoul. There are many great places to walk in Seoul, including its mountains and rivers. We met once a month and walked together for a few hours, hoping to continue this job for a long time while staying healthy. We didn’t just walk, but we also chatted, ate

delicious food, and talked about various things - and then we came up with the idea of participating in the Seoul International Book Fair (SIBF) together.

We received overwhelming attention from all sides. Many people actually came to our booth after seeing the article, and told us that they felt encouraged and empowered. Our book, *The Sisters' Power to Keep Going*, which is a collection of articles we wrote for the fair, was also a hit. We continued to meet with readers through book talks at several bookstores even after the fair ended, and we have been enjoying ourselves through the medium of books, such as organizing a joint exhibition with five publishers. We are also excited to do a more advanced project next year together - but it's a secret at the moment!



"Publishing Sisters" create new values through the solidarity of publishing (the *hanok* in the background is Hyehwa1117), and *The Sisters' Power to Keep Going* that drew great attention at the Seoul International Book Fair (SIBF).

You have published both books that might be more familiar to foreigners, such as *England Meets Joseon a Hundred Years Ago*, *Exploring European Bookstore Culture*, and *Dilkusya: The Old House of Westerners Living in Gyeongseong*, as well as books that are very Korean in nature, such as *Joseon Seen Through Old Pictures* (3 volumes in total) and *Gyeongseong Department Store Merchandise Catalog*, which pique the curiosity of foreign readers. If you were to introduce Hyehwa1117's books to foreign readers, what would be your approach?

Hyehwa1117 mainly publishes books by Korean authors, especially those who have been studying or researching in a specific field for a long time. When we publish a book, we first look at how ingenious the author's achievements are, how long they have been studying, or how broadly and in-depth they cover the topic. This is because we want the book to be exclusive in its field. Then, we work hard to make a book that those who are interested in the same field as our books can't help but read our books. If international readers are interested in a topic and are looking for a Korean book on it, they might want to check Hyehwa1117 first to see if there is a book in that field. And, if you do find a book in that field, please don't hesitate to check it out.



*England Meets Joseon a Hundred Years Ago; Exploring European Bookstore Culture;  
Dilkusha: The Old House of Westerners Living in Gyeongseong;  
Gyeongseong Department Store Merchandise Catalog*

Apart from the books mentioned above, could you please introduce any of the books published by Hyehwa1117 that have been particularly well-received by readers, or those that you personally care about?

I often say that there are two pillars of Hyehwa1117. One is Mr. Choi Yeol. He is one of Korea's leading art historians, and with him, I published *Seoul Seen Through Old Pictures*, *Jeju Seen Through Old Pictures*, *Joseon Seen Through Old Pictures* (3 volumes in total), and *Lee Jung-Seob: Drawings on Letters*.

The other is Dr. Robert J. Fouser. A linguist, Dr. Robert Fouser is a white male and American, but he communicates and writes in Korean. Since publishing his first book with Hyehwa1117, *The Spread of Foreign Languages*, he has released more books, including *Learning Foreign Languages*, *How to Read Cities*, and *Why Do Cities Preserve History?*

We hear most of the compliments about Hyehwa1117's books from these two authors. They are the authors and books that not only make us proud as a publishing company, but also contribute

a large portion of our revenue, helping us stabilize our company. The books that were published a few years ago are still being read by readers, and they are also playing a big role in creating momentum for new books. If I had to name the signature author, or signature book, of Hyehwa1117, I would gladly name these two.



*Seoul Seen Through Old Pictures; Jeju Seen Through Old Pictures; Joseon Seen Through Old Pictures; Lee Jung-Seob: Drawings on Letters*



*The Spread of Foreign Languages; Learning Foreign Languages; How to Read Cities; Why Do Cities Preserve History?*

You have been making a concerted effort to expand opportunities to engage with your readers, such as running programs in collaboration with libraries, booksellers, and authors. What kind of outcomes do you think these efforts are producing?

HyeHwa1117 has been publishing several books by the same author. So, there is often a continuous connection with readers. I try to arrange many events where authors and readers can meet at places like libraries and bookstores, and there, I also get to have close contact with readers. It's like having a very specific, very real audience, not just some conceptual, vague, collective image of "readers." Once you have that, you get to think about each and every one of them - not the vague, indistinct audience - when you are sitting at your desk making a book. Then it becomes very hard to be dishonest in your work, and instead, you want to make better books for them all the time. Interacting with my readers is something that keeps me strong and steady in my attitude and heart towards my work.

As a forward-thinking and challenging one-woman publisher, please tell us about the direction and goals you would like to pursue in the future.

It's been 7 years since HyeHwa1117 was founded. There have often been moments where I thought, "This is the best moment ever," but over time, I have experienced even better moments;

I hope that will continue to be the case, and I am excited about the days ahead of me. At the moment, my biggest interest is how the book, *Joseon's Royal Documentary Painting: Extraordinary Moments of the Royal Family of the Joseon Dynasty Captured in Old Paintings*, which I will produce before the year is out, will be received by readers. Making a comprehensive compilation of documentary paintings from the Joseon Dynasty and releasing it to the world smoothly is the biggest and most important goal right now. The goal for the future is, of course, making good books which we are already doing – that's all.

## KOREAN AUTHORS

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### Writer Park Hyun-Min

Picture books that help children grow with their “materiality”

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A firm belief in “picture books that make the world a better place” has been the foundation for the pursuit of diversity in his works. Picture book writer-illustrator Park Hyun-Min makes picture books by embracing different perspectives and building his own artistic world with a fresh approach. With his focus on the materiality of books, Park gives room to readers through the white spaces, and expands the diversity of picture books. He says he wants children to develop good feelings about picture books as they read them. That’s why Park’s picture books sparkle and shine, as he spreads the positive impact of picture books.



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

Hello, everyone. I'm Park Hyun-Min. It's a pleasure to be meeting you all through this interview. I mostly work on picture books.

Congratulations on winning the 2024 Korea Picture Book Award with *How To Be A True Friend* (Changbi Publishers)! Could you please tell us about the book and how you feel about winning the award?

*How To Be A True Friend* is a fictitious story about a Yeti Institute in the Himalayas that tells a humorous but heartwarming story about nature and relationships between groups or individuals that have different beliefs. As with all of my books, this one is

somewhat atypical - so I was very surprised when I first heard about the award. Instead of feeling like an achievement for a picture book, it felt like recognition and support for the many different attempts I have been making over the years.

\* *K-Book Trends* Vol. 76 – Go to the article about the 2024 Korea Picture Book Award <https://www.kbook-eng.or.kr/sub/info.php?ptype=view&idx=1486&code=info&category=75>



*How to Be A True Friend*

What made you decide to become a picture book writer-illustrator after majoring in structural engineering? Also, are there aspects in which the major helps you write picture books?

There was no special reason for becoming a picture book writer-illustrator - I just wanted to write them because I liked pictures, stories, and books. I did not have a long-term plan in the beginning; I think it's luck that I could keep writing picture books until today. I try to stay humble and do my best everyday,

because writing picture books is not something that can be done only with your will.

I don't think what you have majored in matters that much because the picture book industry is a comprehensive field. Majors play an important role in developing one's identity for sure, but there are people that have their identity established before choosing one. I think any kind of experience helps, because it is reflected into the books in some heartfelt way.

You have had a brilliant career both at home and abroad, winning the Bologna Ragazzi Award Opera Prima - Special Mention in 2021 for your first picture book, *So Much Snow* (Dalgrimm), being selected as the "Illustrator of the Year" at the Bologna Children's Book Fair in 2022 with *City Flight* (Changbi Publishers), and being nominated for the recommended Korean selection at the Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava (BIB) in 2023 with *Finding the Light* (Dalgrimm). What do you think is the driving force behind your public acclaim and global recognition?

It's always a challenge to decide which book to make because there are already so many great books out there. I think they gave high marks for trying to actively utilize the materiality of the book as a medium, and for trying to show diversity within the limited world of commercial publishing.



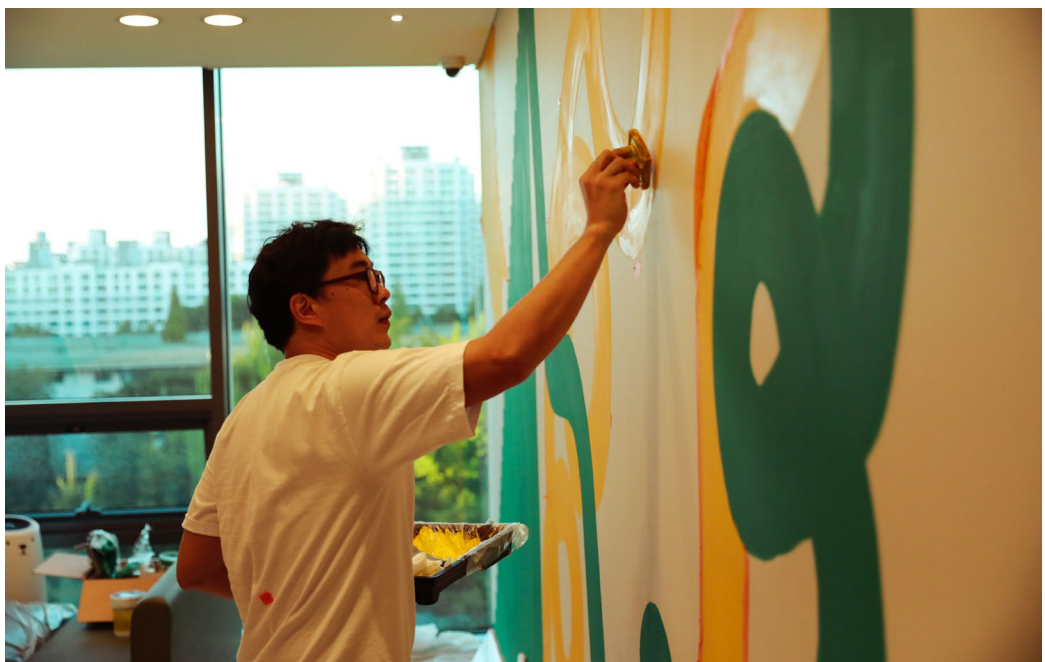
*So Much Snow; City Flight; Finding the Light*

You tend to leave white spaces for readers to fill in with their imagination, just like in the book *Finding the Light*. What role do you think such elements play in picture books, and is there any message that you intend to deliver through white spaces?

White space is one of the key elements in all my books. It emphasizes the relationship between elements and highlights the materials that compose the physicality of books. The reason why we can understand the whole thing even if we only see part of it in pictures is because of the frame we have. We all see the world through a limited frame. I like to see readers recognize this frame and deconstruct it. Another reason I like to use white space is because readers can enrich it by filling it with their own experiences. In the book *Finding the Light*, I designed the city at night with only glass windows. Here, I tried to deliver a message about modern civilization, describing glass windows as an illusion with no real structural function. Inside them, we are lost and wandering, and when the sun rises in the morning, we will see which parts are rigid realities.

It seems that works like *So Much Snow* and *City Flight* show your unique, diverse perspectives and your affection towards the world. How are they reflected in the stories?

When I brainstorm a picture book, I try to look at things familiar from a slightly different perspective. Because humans are predominantly visual thinkers, picture books are a powerful tool for understanding other perspectives. In *So Much Snow*, I focused on the process of expanding our visual frame by showing scales that are unfamiliar to us. And, in *City Flight*, I drew the world from a dandelion's point of view by watching children plucking dandelions to blow their seeds, putting myself in the dandelion's shoes. That's why I wrote in the book, "If you can see the world through someone else's eyes, it means you can love them."



You have said that you want children to find books as something “just fun,” and that you write books because you want them to see and understand the world from different perspectives. So, what books do you usually read to broaden your perspective and to find fun?

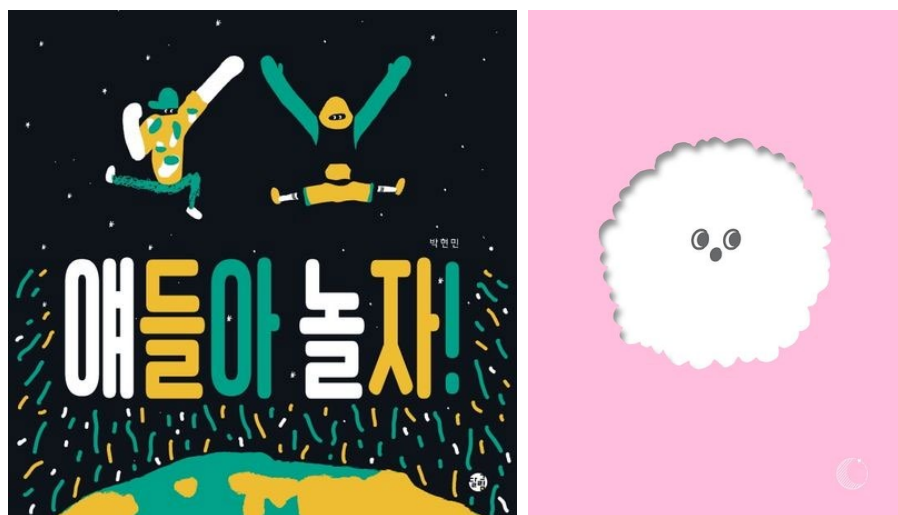
I believe that books make the world a better place. The idea is that while it's important to convey a certain message to children, it's also important to make them feel good about books, feeling that they are valuable, when they are shaping their values. I also think that picture books are a great tool for children to understand things from different perspectives as they are a visual medium.

I usually read many books regardless of their genres - I especially like science books, brain science, evolutionary biology, and particle physics, in particular. It's because they teach us where we came from and where we are stuck.

Your books have been translated and published in various countries around the world. Are there any countries you would like to see your books published in that haven't yet?

Although I had the pleasure of having a connection with the Bologna Children's Book Fair, I was kind of sad that my book was never published in Italy. I would love to have my books published in every country, of course, because not many of them have been published abroad yet. However, because picture

books are generally viewed as a children's category, they tend to be conservative and it's difficult for diverse books to be published. My books are particularly tricky to produce, as they use spot colors. Still, I like to make changes to suit each country's preferences and production environment. Since publishing is a mass medium, I consider it important to find a middle ground to communicate with readers. I also think it's important to have the publisher's identity reflected in the production, as it's not just the author's work alone.



*Let's Play Together (Dalgrimm); A White Dog (Dalgrimm)*

Many Korean picture books, including yours, have been receiving international acclaim these days. What do you think are the distinctive features or competitiveness of Korean picture books?

One foreign publisher I met with said that Korean picture books have a unique lyrical and special sensitivity. While many

people talk about detailed emotional expressions and other characteristics, I think the biggest strength is diversity. Korea still has a strong printing industry and a wide readership for picture books, which is why there are so many different themes and styles of picture books being published. I expect many more good books to come out in the future.

It has been 5 years since you made your debut as a picture book writer-illustrator. You have become one of Korea's leading picture book writer-illustrators with your creative energy, so now what are your plans and goals for the future?

I have been working on highlighting things that the commercial publishing industry doesn't often try or value. While not forgetting that books are a medium that can communicate with a large number of readers, I would like to expand the diversity within it and demonstrate the qualities that only books can have. So, I am actively planning a variety of work that is not limited to genres or categories. At times, I have doubts that I am doing something that is neither this nor that, but I think that is my role - and I will continue to push forward. I look forward to your continued support.

## LET'S TRY

# Make a Stuffed Animal With Simple Hand Stitching

### Event

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

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

Simply click on the link below and make an entry to the event! Let's Try!

### *My First Handmade Stuffed Animal*

- Written by An Ji-Hei, published by JoongAng Books



Here's a detailed guide to making a stuffed animal, right from the prep to the crafting steps. Make your own one-of-a-kind stuffed animal!



Sometimes, something handmade, made with the utmost dedication, is better than anything expensive, especially if it's made with your own hands. In Korea, making a stuffed animal that resembles your "favorite star" has become a bit of a trend. It's because of the extraordinary specialness of making a stuffed

animal that looks like someone you like! If you want to challenge yourself to make your own stuffed animal, but haven't been able to do anything from designing the pattern to buying the fabric and sewing it, then *My First Handmade Stuffed Animal* is for you.

*My First Handmade Stuffed Animal* is a friendly guide for beginners to sewing, introducing basic tools, stitching techniques, fabrics, and patterns. The author, who runs the channel "Handmade Life From Real" on YouTube, has curated a selection of cute and adorable stuffed animal designs that you can make too! This book also includes instructions for making accessories such as dresses, bonnets, and bags to go with the dolls so that you can create and customize your own one-of-a-kind stuffed animals. It will be extra special to you because it was made with your own hands, and you can even give it to a child as a gift because you can choose the fabric you want to use! Follow along with *My First Handmade Stuffed Animal's* detailed, step-by-step instructions, where every step is accompanied by photographs, and you will have your own precious stuffed animal finished before you even realize it.

**Go To Article**

<https://www.kbook-eng.or.kr/sub/event.php?ptype=view&idx=1490&code=knowledge&category=67>

NEW BOOKS

# The Most Beautiful Moments in Life

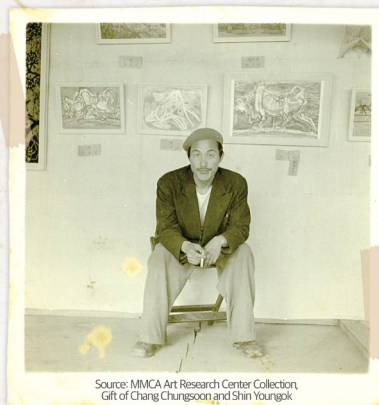
Centered on the Artistic Life of Lee Jung-Seob





After contemplating his life's  
“*hwayangyeonhwa* (花樣年華; meaning  
‘the most beautiful moments in life’),”  
Kim Tak-Hwan, a novelist for 30 years,  
eventually reached artist Lee Jung-Seob,  
best known for his masterpiece *A Bull*.  
This led to the novel *The Best Moments in Life*.

*The Best Moments in Life*,  
complete with reports, historical research, and interviews  
he conducted while imagining the landscapes  
where Lee would have stayed, walked, and gazed at,  
depicts the *hwayangyeonhwa* of Lee Jung-Seob’s art  
against the backdrop of Tongyeong, where some of  
the most notable artists of the 1950s came together  
to ignite a cultural renaissance.



Source: MMCA Art Research Center Collection,  
Gift of Chang Chungsoon and Shin Youngok

“The best thing of all was just the time itself,  
running like the ocean,  
when I was completely immersed in painting.”

- from the book

*The Most Beautiful Moments in Life,*  
the 32nd full-length novel  
by Kim Tak-Hwan,

presents new images of  
artist Lee Jung-Seob in  
a collaboration of paintings  
and imagination, heightening  
the story's novelistic appeal.

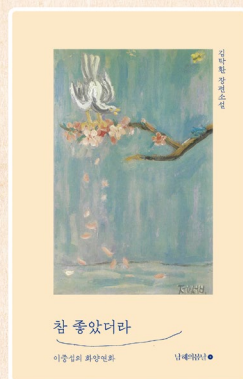


With Lee Jung-Seob and  
other artists having spent  
the best moments in Tongyeong,

novelist Kim Tak-Hwan gives  
new values to various things through  
his novel, presenting  
the best *hwayangyeonhwa* to all artists,  
including himself.



Our *hwayangyeonhwa* is  
right now, right this moment.



*The Most Beautiful  
Moments in Life:  
Centered on  
the Artistic Life  
of Lee Jung-Seob*

Kim Tak-Hwan,  
Namhaebomnal

**BEST SELLERS**

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**2nd Week, October 2024****Best seller Trends in the Three Biggest Online Bookstores  
in Korea**

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It is fall in Korea, a time of year that seems to fly by so quickly that it feels even more precious. In this season, perfect for reading, Han Kang's winning of the Nobel Prize in Literature has caused a huge sensation in the Korean publishing market. As the first Korean and second Asian to win the Nobel Prize in Literature, Han Kang's literary success immediately translated into her books becoming best sellers. The jubilation, excitement, and compliments were expressed in the form of "Read Han Kang" by readers. With the festive vibe sweeping through the publishing industry, an unprecedented phenomenon happened: a single author's works began to dominate the best seller lists. Readers' interest in Han Kang's works led to most of her books selling out, and the excitement of winning the Nobel Prize in Literature was so intense that it overwhelmed the chill of the fall.

*Human Acts*, which was the first book that Han Kang recommended to be read, topped the list at all three major online bookstores in Korea, followed by *The Vegetarian*, which made headlines when it won the International Booker Prize in 2016, in second place, as well as *We Do Not Part*, which received a renewed spotlight after winning the Nobel Prize in Literature and was awarded the Prix Médicis étranger in 2023, in third place. Han's other titles include *The White Book*, *I Put the Evening in the Drawer*, *Greek Lessons*, and *Yeosu*. This shows that Han Kang's works are enjoying a resurgence in popularity, as it confirms both her literary prominence and the public's love for her works.




The only other title to make it to the best seller list amidst this powerful "Han Kang Effect" was Kim Nan-Do's *Trend Korea 2025*. The book's dominance continued in the second week of October, taking the top position in the business category. The book is regarded as one of the most timely and accurate reflections of Korean trends and has been on the best seller list year after year. The second place went to *Forecast of the Times: Name-calling Society*, a new addition to the *Forecast of the Times* series by star author Song Gil-Young. He talks about the "name-calling society," saying, "The way we make a living is to find our own names." Other books in the top five included *Money Trend 2025* and *Park Tae-Woong's AI Lecture 2025*, highlighting Korean readers' continuing interest in business books that help them keep up

with the changes of the times.

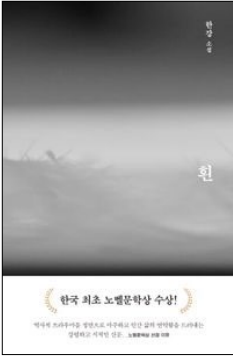



\* *K-Book Trends Vol. 72* – Go to the interview with writer Song Gil-Young  
<https://www.kbook-eng.or.kr/sub/interview.php?ptype=view&idx=1433&page=1&code=interview&category=66>

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

Top 10 best sellers for the 2nd week of October

1		<p><b><i>Human Acts</i></b></p> <p>Author   Han Kang          Publisher   Changbi Publishers          Genre   Fiction</p>
2		<p><b><i>The Vegetarian</i></b></p> <p>Author   Han Kang          Publisher   Changbi Publishers          Genre   Fiction</p>
2		<p><b><i>We Do Not Part</i></b></p> <p>Author   Han Kang          Publisher   Munhakdongne          Genre   Fiction</p>

Top 10 best sellers for the 2nd week of October

4		<p><b><i>The White Book</i></b></p> <p>Author   Han Kang          Publisher   Munhakdongne          Genre   Fiction</p>
5		<p><b><i>I Put the Evening in the Drawer</i></b></p> <p>Author   Han Kang          Publisher   Moonji Books          Genre   Poetry</p>
6		<p><b><i>Greek Lessons</i></b></p> <p>Author   Han Kang          Publisher   Munhakdongne          Genre   Fiction</p>
7		<p><b><i>The Essential</i></b></p> <p>Author   Han Kang          Publisher   Munhakdongne          Genre   Fiction</p>

Top 10 best sellers for the 2nd week of October

8		<p><b><i>The Wind is Blowing</i></b></p> <p>Author   Han Kang          Publisher   Munhakdongne          Genre   Fiction</p>
9		<p><b><i>Yeosu</i></b></p> <p>Author   Han Kang          Publisher   Munhakdongne          Genre   Fiction</p>
9		<p><b><i>Trend Korea 2025</i></b></p> <p>Author   Kim Nan-Do          Publisher   Mirae Books          Genre   Business</p>

Top 5 business books for the 2nd week of October

1		<p><b><u>Trend Korea 2025</u></b></p> <p>Author   Kim Nan-Do          Publisher   Mirae Books</p>
2		<p><b><u>Forecast of the Times: Name-calling Society</u></b></p> <p>Author   Song Gil-Young          Publisher   Kyobo Book Centre</p>
3		<p><b><u>Money Trend 2025</u></b></p> <p>Author   Jeong Tae-Ik and others          Publisher   Book Moment</p>
4		<p><b><u>Same as Ever</u></b></p> <p>Author   Morgan Housel          Publisher   Seosamdok</p>
5		<p><b><u>Park Tae-Woong's AI Lecture 2025</u></b></p> <p>Author   Park Tae-Woong          Publisher   Hanbit Biz</p>

## #K-BOOK

## #Growth

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

#### *Aro and the Complete World*

##### 1. Publication Details

Title | Aro and the Complete World  
 Author | Kim HyeJin  
 Publisher | Baram Books  
 Publication Date | 2004-10-20  
 ISBN | 9788990878113  
 No. of pages | 528  
 Dimensions | 148 \* 210



##### 2. Book Intro

New fantasy for upper-level elementary school students!

This adventure story features an ordinary girl, Aro who gets transported inside a book and travels through twelve countries on a quest to find a copy of a book that tells the story of the “Complete World.” The writer’s imagination paints a picture of twelve countries that are each distinctive and fascinating. In addition, the writer gives birth to unique characters whose internal minds are captured in meticulous detail.

Aro is just an ordinary girl, like any other children, but through this adventure of constant challenges, she grows. Aro’s inner psychology as she goes through these rough adventures is brought out in the words and rich symbolism of the writer. The page-turning plot and marvelous events taking place make reading 500 pages an easy task. *Aro and the Complete World* is rare work, showing the literary achievement of Korean fantasy.

Aro becomes the “Reader” the moment she picks up an old book called “The Story of the Complete World” in the library. The “Reader” is the person who will protect the order and peace of the twelve nations that exist in the Complete World. Not having been read by a Reader for a long time, this world was in despair and all balance had been shattered. But now, finally, the Reader has arrived and just by reading “The Story of the Complete World,” the Reader can restore everything back to normal. But not everyone welcomes the savior from the outside world. Yuhare, the supreme wise man of the Complete World cannot trust the Reader from an incomplete world and he is dissatisfied that the fate of the twelve nations in the hands of “Reader.” So he plans a conspiracy that goes against the order of the World. The day before the Reader decides to read the book, he steals it. When the book that will enable Aro to return to her incomplete world disappears, she must meet and collect copies of the first beings of the twelve nations with the story of the Complete World. Aro sets off on an exciting adventure that she could never have imagined.

Together with Mole, the story-collector, and Misolfa, a kid from the singing country, Aro voyages through various dangers to collect the copies from twelve countries. She travels through the wonderful countries on her journey: as a starry country of magic and knowledge, a floating city, a country of color, a singing country of music, an architectural city with mysterious spaces, a masked country of night and darkness, a mountainous country of animals, and more. In the meantime, Yuhare starts a war that is going to divide the twelve countries. Will Aro, who has suddenly become the “Reader,” be able to restore order to the Complete World and return to the incomplete world in which we live?

\* [k-book.or.kr/user/books/books\\_view?idx=1984](http://k-book.or.kr/user/books/books_view?idx=1984)

## *Eight Questions for Humanistic Growth*

### 1. Publication Details

Title | Eight Questions for Humanistic Growth

Subtitle | A contemplative essay by Kim Jongwon to help people become more creative in their everyday

Author | Kim Jongwon

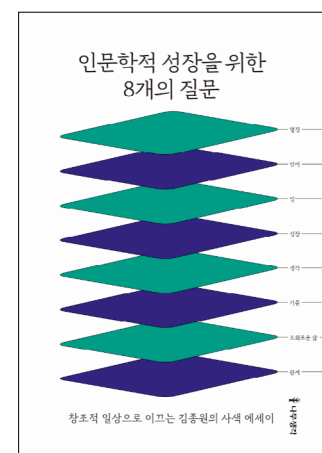
Publisher | Thoughts of a Tree Publishing Co.

Publication Date | 2020-05-13

ISBN | 9791162181003

No. of pages | 260

Dimensions | 135 \* 200



## 2. Book Intro

One thing to always remember when aiming to create the best version of the self is the idea that everything is getting better. The passing strong winds, the drenching rain, or the hot summer sun—all of these are great ingredients that play a role in the completion of the self. One must believe that every day is another process for creating the best possible day.

While we strive to become the best versions of ourselves, we endlessly seek the answers to life and directions to follow in our own lives. Is there any way to slip my head out from the yoke of work? Is there no way to live in peace without being influenced by someone or something? Will tomorrow be better than today? Why can't I seem to get along with this person? Some thoughts take us a step forward, while others take us a step back. Likewise, some thoughts remain as delusions, while others take form and change the world.

The subject of humanities originates from love towards people and the world; it is not just something to be learned, but something to be practiced and extended into life itself. Therefore, we contemplate more deeply and seek more intensely the answers to our questions on our journey. Contemplation in daily life leads to the development of a personal philosophy of life, which becomes the driver of change in each aspect of one's life. Discussing larger, life-impacting topics such as passion, work, growth, thought, dignity, harmony, and relationships, the author utilizes multiple angles to search for methods through which we may contemplate and work towards richer and more balanced lives.

\* [k-book.or.kr/user/books/books\\_view?idx=3973](http://k-book.or.kr/user/books/books_view?idx=3973)

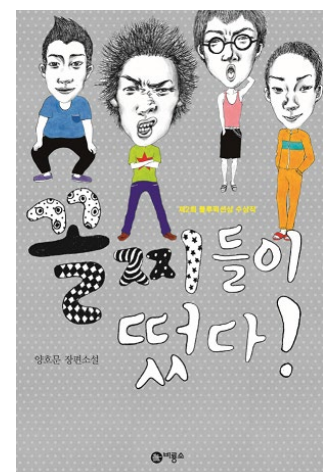
## *Here Come the Losers!*

### 1. Publication Details

Title | Here Come the Losers!  
Author | Yang Ho-moon  
Publisher | BIR Publishing Co., Ltd.  
Publication Date | 2008-12-05  
ISBN | 9788949120843  
No. of pages | 356  
Dimensions | 133 \* 203

### 2. Book Intro

This book vividly captures how the so-called 'losers', alienated early on due to society focusing on academic achievement, wander about without purpose and realize the meaning of life, death, individuals, and



society as they meet various people with different life stories and eventually find themselves.

“It’s really true. The fake is more plausible and just as real!” Jaewoong and other children are caught in the corruption of a vicious company exploiting their labor and are driven to a construction site where high-voltage transmission towers are being built in a mountain village. There’s also a variety of characters in the construction site and the village, each with different personal stories. Trying to save the village at all costs, the steel tower assembly team, who served as airborne troops; Uncle Yeom holding the tears of a hedgehog; the head of the village; and Grandpa Yoo Ciel serve as various prisms through which children can understand life and humans. Jaewoong also has mixed feelings of like and dislike towards people, such as Manager Kim, who treats them well on the surface but eventually reduces the children’s wages. Manager Kim is also at the center of the company’s corruption scandal, and Assistant Manager Yang, who cares for the children while muttering curse words under his breath, and Yukbeopdaesa, an examinee preparing for a state exam, who stands by the side of the residents and children and leads a protest against the company before stepping down later on. Through these diverse forms of people, children ponder what a true human being is or what it means to be a true adult, realizing that what they see is not everything while learning the fact that life is a complex process of disputes and reconciliation, joy and pain, and life and death.

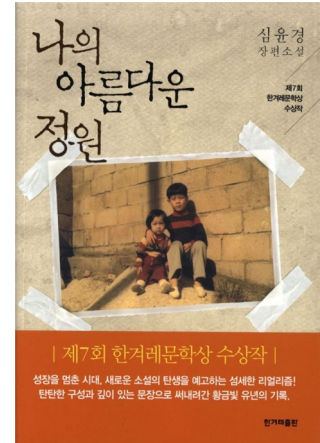
The story in this book is depicted in a construction site of transmission towers in a remote mountain village far from the daily lives of city dwellers—a desolate village where all the young people have left and only the elderly remain. Nevertheless, it doesn’t feel like someone else’s business as the vividness of real experiences is well captured. The author has succeeded in reviving the reality of real-life scenes with strong, outspoken handwriting and vivid portrayals of reality. This can be felt not only in the scenes of sweat and labor, but also in those scenes where violence and strong language is exchanged during protests by the villagers following the water catastrophe, the scene of the cow giving birth to a calf, when Jaewoong is left in agony after failing to confess his unrequited love to Eunhyang, and at the funeral which becomes a venue for cooperation and kinship.

\* [k-book.or.kr/user/books/books\\_view?idx=3781](http://k-book.or.kr/user/books/books_view?idx=3781)

## *My Beautiful Garden*

### 1. Publication Details

Title | My Beautiful Garden  
Author | Sim Yun Kyung  
Publisher | Hankyoreh Publishing Company  
Publication Date | 2013-11-18  
ISBN | 9788984317437  
No. of pages | 356  
Dimensions | 153 \* 224



### 2. Book Intro

*My Beautiful Garden* is a beautiful coming-of-age novel that has won the 7th Hankyoreh Literary Award and sold more than 100,000 copies. Sim Yun Kyung's first novel features sophisticated writing and provides readers with literary pleasure. The story revolves around the story of a family from 1977 to 1981. The protagonist Donggu who has been illiterate gradually opens his mind to the outside world with the help of his teacher Park. However, his foul-mouthed grandmother and cold-hearted father keep him from learning how to read and write.

“A grandmother who wields absolute power without limitation, a heartless father who uses violence as if it is a privilege given to the breadwinner, a mother who only grows thinner just like rotten tofu, and Donggu, who suffers from stammering dyslexia, is unable to communicate with his family. Unfortunately, his younger sister Youngju, who has served as a bridge between family and Donggu's teacher, the hope of his life, dies. After the sorrow and pain have swept him away, Donggu begins to step forward carefully with hope in his heart. Readers may be led to enter into the garden of their own mind, have a seat, stare at the scars of their childhood, and feel empathy and consolation thinking that people had no other choices back then”. (School Library Journal)

\* [k-book.or.kr/user/books/books\\_view?idx=1087](http://k-book.or.kr/user/books/books_view?idx=1087)

## Regarding My Forties

### 1. Publication Details

Title | Regarding My Forties  
Subtitle | All the possible beginnings  
Author | Jung Yeo-wool  
Publisher | Hankyoreh Publishing Company  
Publication Date | 2018-11-24  
ISBN | 9791160402070  
No. of pages | 268  
Dimensions | 136 \* 200



### 2. Book Intro

Jeong Yeoul subtly tells her story to readers, and in the process, quietly comforts them. By merging literature and psychology, Jeong tells the story of the pain and growth in life through the subject of her “forties” this time. Jeong meticulously records self-realizations, putting them in the category of before and after the age of forty, and writes *Regarding My Forties* in essay form to help people grow. Just as life becomes more meaningful when we think about death, we start to understand youth and old age when we are faced with our forties. Our thirties give us the wisdom to observe things from a distance rather than represent an anxious-ridden youth. Our forties tell us that we need to seize the present moment and enjoy it, and our fifties urge us not to forget our new strength and courage.

\* [k-book.or.kr/user/books/books\\_view?idx=2538](http://k-book.or.kr/user/books/books_view?idx=2538)

## Seven Blind

### 1. Publication Details

Title | Seven Blind  
Author | Kim Sun Hee; Na Yoon-a; Moon Bu-il; Park Ha-ryeong; Shin Ji-young; Yang Ho-moon  
Publisher | sowonnamu  
Publication Date | 2018-04-20  
ISBN | 9791186531679  
No. of pages | 312  
Dimensions | 128 \* 188



## 2. Book Intro

Now is the time to have an honest conversation about the 7 issues that today's youth are made to face but society refuses to acknowledge!

Prostitution, gambling addiction, hidden camera crimes are issues that you may think have little to do with young people, but many issues including these are what young adults are faced with. Rather than trying to find out why today's youth must encounter such problems, society often tries to alienate such kids or brand them as criminals. *Seven Blind* is a collection of short stories about such ignored issues the youth today deal with. The project hopes to make society shift its focus to the very difficult issues of the youth generation.

1) Grooming: A short story about a predator grooming a victim for sexual assault, it sheds light on the issue of prostitution today's youth are faced with.

2) Searching for Duo: A story that shows the process of how youths find themselves in the trap of gambling (difficult upbringing, extreme stress, impulsiveness) and talks about the dangers of addiction.

3) Five perhaps, already: This story exposes the indecent sexual notion adults in society hold towards underage youths and deals with hidden camera crimes targeting youths.

4) On tiptoe: The story speaks of the problem of bullying, as it follows Dami who learns how to overcome bullying.

5) I want to know everything about you: The story focuses on the so-called stalking fandom, as it follows a young girl whose life gets lost in the overly obsessive fandom culture.

6) The willow bench: The story helps readers understand youth suicide, and remind youths of the value of life.

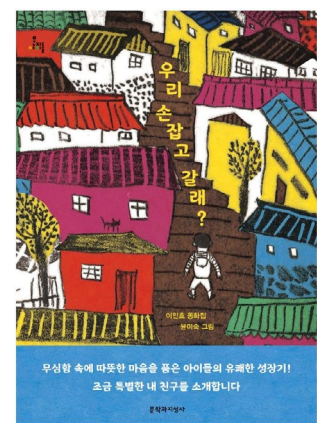
7) The Do Gi-tae Coupon: The story illustrates how love and care can sometimes be transformed into violence. It conveys the lesson that verbal abuse is also a form of violence.

\* [k-book.or.kr/user/books/books\\_view?idx=2771](http://k-book.or.kr/user/books/books_view?idx=2771)

## *Shall We Hold Hands?*

### 1. Publication Details

Title | Shall We Hold Hands?  
Author | Lee Inho; Yoon Misook  
Publisher | Moonji Publishing Co., Ltd.  
Publication Date | 2017-11-20  
ISBN | 9788932030586  
No. of pages | 196  
Dimensions | 152 \* 212



## 2. Book Intro

My secrets were exposed to someone I didn't know... Then we became friends. The beautiful friendship of teenagers, like magnet that attract each other! The changes made by four children who have a lot to worry about are depicted in a heartwarming, yet characteristic story that will mesmerize readers through incidents that can happen to anyone. The stable language, lively characters and well-organized structure of this book are astounding and unbelievable, considering it is the writer's first. The writer's ability to develop a story that anyone can accept and sympathize without overwhelming readers with exaggerated settings or plots is simply remarkable.

The four colorful and characteristic friendships depicted in the four different stories remove the self-defense of children who build walls around themselves due to the overwhelming pressure of being compared to one another and being forced to compete. Friends who come to children exhausted from their daily lives and relationships are like a gentle rain on dry land. Children will learn how close they were to losing something precious due to "being different" and "prejudices."

\* [k-book.or.kr/user/books/books\\_view?idx=2190](http://k-book.or.kr/user/books/books_view?idx=2190)

## *The Eerie Weather and Good People*

### 1. Publication Details

Title | *The Eerie Weather and Good People*

Author | Im Sola

Publisher | Moonji Publishing Co., Ltd.

Publication Date | 2017-03-06

ISBN | 9788932029931

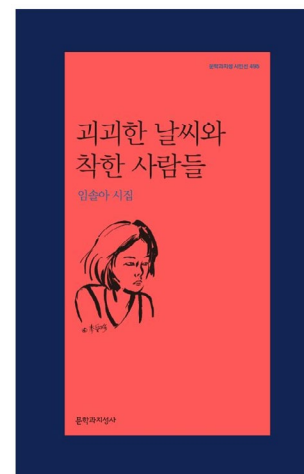
No. of pages | 124

Dimensions | 128 \* 205

### 2. Book Intro

This is the first collection of poems by Im Sola, who is a poet and novelist. *The Eerie Weather and Good People* features multiple poems that look into the speaker and the speaker's thoughts that fail to either adjust to or make compromises with the world stained with irrationality and violence. Her poems show the attempts the speaker makes to see the world objectively and take a step further in order to solve inner conflicts. Those poems reflect the will of the poet who tries to deliver her message with words.

The world is far from beautiful to the speaker. As presented in *Beauty*, it's a "beautiful planet" to others, but "hell" to the speaker. In a world filled with fakes and



replicas, where there is no giraffe in a giraffe, no Earth in the Earth, and no people in people, the speaker exists by failing to be “replica like person.” By separating inner self from the self within the world, the speaker acknowledges the world that constitutes him/her. In other words, the speaker confirms the gap between the self and the world, and identifies the circumstance through the process of objectification. How Im Sola acknowledges the world, in the process of understanding and recognizing the conflict between the world and the self, is followed by action. The speaker, who repeatedly tells stories which can be anticipated as easily as a weather forecast, who repeatedly hears that they are a good person, are like a person trapped inside a window, and now the speaker tries to push the “Eerie Weather and Good People” who are hidden within (inside the speaker) out the window. Looking inside the person people claim to be a good person by opening the window, one finds one who passively repeats the same words, and by pushing out what is not oneself (together with the good people), one can finally become oneself. By not making compromises with the friendly assessments of the world, one becomes oneself.

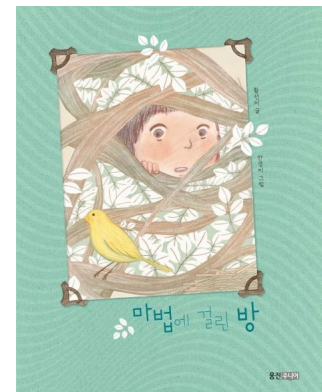
These aggressive actions resumed by the speaker makes several appearances throughout the collection, and in the end, they all gather into a single story. The speaker stepping forward again from acknowledging the irrationality of the world inspires the will to change the hell-like world continuously with small acts.

\* [k-book.or.kr/user/books/books\\_view?idx=2192](http://k-book.or.kr/user/books/books_view?idx=2192)

## *The Enchanted Room*

### 1. Publication Details

Title | The Enchanted Room  
Author | Hwang Sunmi; Ahn Kyoungmi  
Publisher | Woongjin ThinkBig Co., Ltd.  
Publication Date | 2019-07-29  
ISBN | 9788901233390  
No. of pages | 164  
Dimensions | 168 \* 214



### 2. Book Intro

*Magpie-Singing Morning* by writer Hwang Sunmi is born again as *The Enchanted Room* with a new set of illustrations. Like the writer's saying that the small hopes she shared with ordinary people became the seed of children's stories, the 8 stories feature in *The Enchanted Room* are about neighbors we can expect to encounter in daily life.

*Spin, Yo-yo* and *On the Way to the Top of Mountain* tell about the unconscious

obsession with what one really wants, and the hierarchy and isolation among friends. *The 4th Luck*, *Granddad*, *It's Me*, *Birthday Tree* and *The Enchanted Room* are stories about a family, such as a father losing a job, a sister who is ill, and adoption. *Magpie-singing Morning* and *Guseula, Guseula!* included in *The Enchanted Room* are stories we can easily sympathize with, feel sorry about and want to root for.

\* [k-book.or.kr/user/books/books\\_view?idx=2002](http://k-book.or.kr/user/books/books_view?idx=2002)

## *The Shop That Sells Time*

### 1. Publication Details

Title | The Shop That Sells Time  
Author | Kim Seonyeong  
Publisher | Jaeum & Moeum Publishing Co., Ltd.  
Publication Date | 2012-04-10  
ISBN | 9788954427173  
No. of pages | 268  
Dimensions | 140 \* 205



### 2. Book Intro

Time flows, but time gone by doesn't end there.

Onjo, the protagonist, opens "The Shop That Sells Time" online, under the nickname "Chronos." Onjo's father, a great fire fighter, died at a young age; by opening the shop, Onjo wants to follow in her dad's footsteps and help her clients resolve their problems.

The first client asks Onjo to resolve an incident surrounding a stolen MP3 player. Specifically, the client asks her to put the stolen MP3 player back in its place.

The year before, someone's MP3 player was stolen at Onjo's school. During an independent study period one evening, the teacher found out who had stolen it, and she told the culprit to come to her office the next day. Filled with dread, the culprit jumped from the school rooftop that night and died. The owner of the MP3 player transferred to another school, and the incident was buried by the school and the families involved. Afraid that someone else might die as a result of a similar incident, Onjo struggles to find a solution to the problem

If you hold on to time, you may come to an extraordinary moment in time.

As the days go by, Onjo is given more and more requests. Some ask her to deliver mail to heaven, wanting to hold onto time; some ask her to be their friend.

As the requests continue to pour in, it's revealed who it was that almost died because of the lost MP3 player, and an unexpected crisis occurs. And as Onjo wisely seeks answers amid this crisis, she comes to an important realization

about time.

There's no telling where time will take the present moment. What is certain is that time does lead the present moment to someplace different. As Onjo overcomes the crisis and resolves the problem, she learns that if she holds on to that moment in time and doesn't let go, she can turn a time of despair into a time of hope.

\* [k-book.or.kr/user/books/books\\_view?idx=480](http://k-book.or.kr/user/books/books_view?idx=480)

INFO

# 2024 Korea Picture Book Award

Announcement of the Winners and the Awards Ceremony



2024 Korea  
Picture Book Award



Special Prize



**Sewol 1994-2014**  
written by Moon Eun-A,  
illustrated by Park Kun-Woong,  
published by Noran Sangsang Books



**When You Visit  
the Local Markets**  
written and illustrated by  
Kim Jung-Sun,  
published by  
Gilbut Children Publishing

2024 Korea  
Picture Book Award



Special Prize



**Papillon**  
written and  
illustrated by  
Kim Sun-Pai,  
published by  
Tigerdream Books



**Railwayman**  
written and illustrated by  
Chang Sun-Hwan,  
published by  
Manmanbooks



**The Taste of  
the Tart**  
written and  
illustrated by  
Kim Ji-Min,  
published by  
Hansol Soobook



**The Child Who  
Fell From the Sky**  
written by  
Jeon Mi-Hwa,  
illustrated by  
Cho Wan-Hee,  
published by  
Moonji Publishing

2024 Korea  
Picture Book Award



Rookie of the Year



**Moonterview**  
written and illustrated by  
Lim Yoon,  
published by  
Pulbit Publishing

www.k-picturebook.kr



# 2024 Korea Picture Book Award

Announcement of  
Awards Ceremony

**Date**  
Monday, November 4, 2024,  
at 14:00

**Venue**  
Ferrum Hall,  
Ferrum Tower (3F)

**Content**  
9 awards in 3 categories