

A painting of a young girl with red hair, wearing a blue and white striped shirt, sitting on a wooden log in a pond. She is reading a book. The pond is filled with green lily pads and white water lilies. The background is a lush green landscape with more lily pads and flowers. The text is overlaid on the painting.

**NEW  
SWEDISH  
BOOKS**

**FOR  
YOUNG  
READERS**

**2011**



society and its so-called curling-parents who frantically rush ahead of their children, clearing obstacles out of their way. *Diktatorn* can also be read as the story of a perfectly ordinary little boy. He decides when his parents may hug and kiss him, demands: 'I WANT FOOD' and is immediately served food. With subtle humour Stark and Bondestam show how odious children can be, with their demands and their sense of self-importance, and how the adult world allows this to happen. The dictator's father calls to mind Alfons Åberg's father in Günilla Bergström's popular books. Inserted into the pictures are tickets, and cuttings from Russian news-

papers. Despite the references to the 70s there is something bang up-to-date in the character of the protagonist and Bondestam's use of retro style. Perhaps the simple moral is that it is more fun being a kind person than one who makes all the decisions. The text does not offer many clues, simply leading the reader through the everyday life of the dictator, but the back cover reads: 'In the end it can be lonely being a very little dictator. Because you can't decide that someone has to be your friend.'

With gravity and warmth **Sassa Buregren** and **Maud Mangold** tell the story of *Kokongs långa resa* (Kokong's Long Journey). A train conductor

finds a small bundle on a luggage rack and decides to take it home: 'Dear little dumpling, why are you here / left among the cases? / I can't leave you all alone / on the coat rack - of all places.' *Kokongs långa resa* is Buregren's and Mangold's third collaboration and just like their previous book, *Pärlor till pappa*, its theme is heartrending. *Kokongs långa resa* is written in verse and describes Kokong's journey through a new country, Sweden. When the conductor and his cat open the bundle they are not entirely sure what kind of object has landed under their Christmas tree. 'A crumple? Or a bumble? Or perhaps more of a wrinkle, such a teeny-tiny

LEFT SIDE: FROM 'KOKONGS LONG JOURNEY' BY SASSA BUREGREN (TEXT) AND MAUD MANGOLD (ILLUSTRATIONS). THIS SIDE: FROM EVERY CHILD'S RIGHT\* BY PERNILLA STALFELT

twinkle.' On the first page there are orange mountains under a clear yellow sky, and a figure carrying a bundle. The adult reader will be able to work out who it is that must leave its little bundle on a train all alone. It isn't easy for little Kokong to feel at home in the conductor's house. Forgetting is hard and when the homesickness becomes too great Kokong runs away and lies down to rest in the station waiting room. And just when it feels about as tragic as it can possibly get, along comes the conductor and fetches Kokong from the waiting-room. Kokong is allowed to borrow the conductor's cap and thinks that perhaps the conductor's house is lovely and cosy

after all, decorated prettily for Christmas. The cat and the conductor sit at the table and Kokong lays out ketchup, mustard and herrings. It might be an unorthodox family but Kokong seems to be happy there at last.

**Pernilla Stalfelt** depicts a child's vulnerability in the world in a more concrete way. In the picture book *Alla barns rätt* (Every Child's Right) she illustrates and interprets the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child. She draws two adults with giant ears, listening to a child who is trying to say something, and a mother saying 'Dad's stupid', holding tightly to her the child who longs for its father

who is crying on the other side of the picture. It is predominantly about children in Kokong's situation, who have come from another country but have rights such as keeping their name or believing in whatever they choose (for some, angels, for others Ganesha the elephant-headed god, or democracy, or even Father Christmas!). Stalfelt's pictures are, as always, in the naive style, and in its format *Alla barns rätt* resembles her successful series with titles such as *Bajsboken* (The Poo Book), *Härboken* (The Hair Book) and *Dödenboken* (The Death Book).

**Anna-Clara Tidholm** has through the years illustrated books by several of



TRÈS BIEN MERCI ET VOUS?

HELLO! HOW ARE YOU?

JCH BIN VERRICHT

JO SONO UN ITALIANO VERO

木風人生心山

ESTARÁS SIEMPRE EN MI CORAZÓN