Books from Denmark

The Danish picture books were chosen by the Danish IBBY members and the librarians in the children’s departments in Denmark. A call was sent out for nominations and a number of very fine suggestions were received. The IBBY board and Kirsten Boelt met and agreed the 10 Danish picture books shown here below.

1. Egon Mathiesen
   Mis med de blå øjne [The blue eyed pussy cat]

   The blue eyed pussy cat is not like all the other cats. They tease him for his blue eyes. But he becomes popular because he finds the land of many mice.
   The blue eyed pussy cat from 1949 is one of writer, painter and illustrator, Egon Mathiesen’s most familiar and beloved picture books for children. His poetic and simple texts combined with the illustrations created a new departure for Danish children’s literature in the post war period. The book is a classic and still read aloud to Danish children. For 3-6 year-olds.

2. Flemming Quist Møller
   Cykelmyggen Egon [Bicycle mosquito Egon]

   Bicycle mosquito Egon loves hard and fast sprints. So it was in 1967 when Egon machined out of the water on a great, new racing bike in Flemming Quist Møller’s picture book which remains a classic today. The book, in which Egon travels the world and ends up in a circus, is illustrated with fanciful colors and a detailed and lively bar. Quist Møller is both author, illustrator and musician, and received in 2006 Gyldendal’s Book Prize, which was awarded to an author or illustrator who has done something special for children’s literature. For 3-6 year-olds.
It is not easy to be a young snowy owl when you are not aware of what a young snowy owl really is saying. What does Ulla the young snowy owl say? is the story of Ulla, who cannot speak openly and does not know how she should get the words out when she meets the other animals. But maybe they can help!

The text is tight and clear, full of repetitions and sound that fit comfortably on the tongue. Illustrations by Charlotte Pardies are beautiful and simple in the colors blue and white. The book is from 2009 and has already been appointed as a classics for children. For 2-4 year-olds.

A walk with the dog is an imaginative photo story told and illustrated by Bente Nyström Olesen. The reader travels with the dog on a tour through one image after another over 12 detailed notices, accompanied by a short text on four lines. It teems with secrets, stories and mysteries, which are to explore.

Bente Olesen Nyström is an award-winning artist and illustrator. She has made numerous picture books and illustrated, among others, works about animals and plants. For 4-7 year-olds.

The book Mom from 1998 is about a boy who has a fat mother. Extremely fat. She can smell a hot dog stand a hundred feet away. And she will not eat carrots and become thin. It’s embarrassing, the boy thinks, and he decides to find a new mother who is nice and slim. Kim Fupz Aakeson treats the subject ‘unconditional love’ in a warm and funny way. The drawings of Mom and her boy who is so embarrassed, so embarrassed by his fat mother is spread over the pages with loving hand by illustrator Mette Kirstine Bak. The 1999 Cultural Ministry Illustrator Award. For 8 year-olds and older.

Finn Herman from 2001 is about the fine lady who wants to go into town with her sweet crocodile Finn Herman. Of course it’s a little dangerous, but Finn Herman’s mother gives him good advice, so nothing happens ... with Finn Herman, anyway. It ends with Finn Herman becoming so fat that he cannot even be in the book – so there must be a page pamphlet to show how big and fat he was after their walk. Finn Herman was designed by Hanne Bartholin, who received The Ministry of Culture Illustrator Prize for his humorous drawings that subtly and simply describe how her mother did not believe that the crocodile can do no wrong. For 4-6 year-olds.
Maria and her brother are street children and earn money by collecting garbage. The adults require them to deliver everything they find. But one day Maria finds the finest doll that she really wants to keep. But Maria can lie to the adults when they ask: “Is that all? Aren’t you keeping anything?” Maria’s doll is a picture book for schoolchildren. It tells of street children’s conditions and is about sibling love, friendship, poverty and survival. For 6-10 year-olds.

Little frog comes down from outer space. Straight into an unsuspecting frog family in the middle of their coziest hour in front of the television. The family takes the frog into their arms and loves it as one of their own children. There’s just one problem: Little frog is very, very bad. He ends up being sent to specialists and the school psychologist. However, being part of a family who love him, helps Little Frog to find his place in the world. This story won Jakob Strid the Danish part of the Nordic picture book competition, in 2004. For 4-6 year-olds.

In every way a great book, that gathers all the stories of the thunder god, the fertility creator, fighter, fire maker and hero Thor from Nordic mythology. Narrated in large, gentle, violent, sensual, and dramatic color images in Ib Spang Olsen’s special tone of language, so you can even hear him talk. A book for all ages and at all times. The book is a series of vivid and grandiose stories carried by a warm tone, in a visual language that has its own highly textural texture. It is simply good. For 6 year-olds and older.