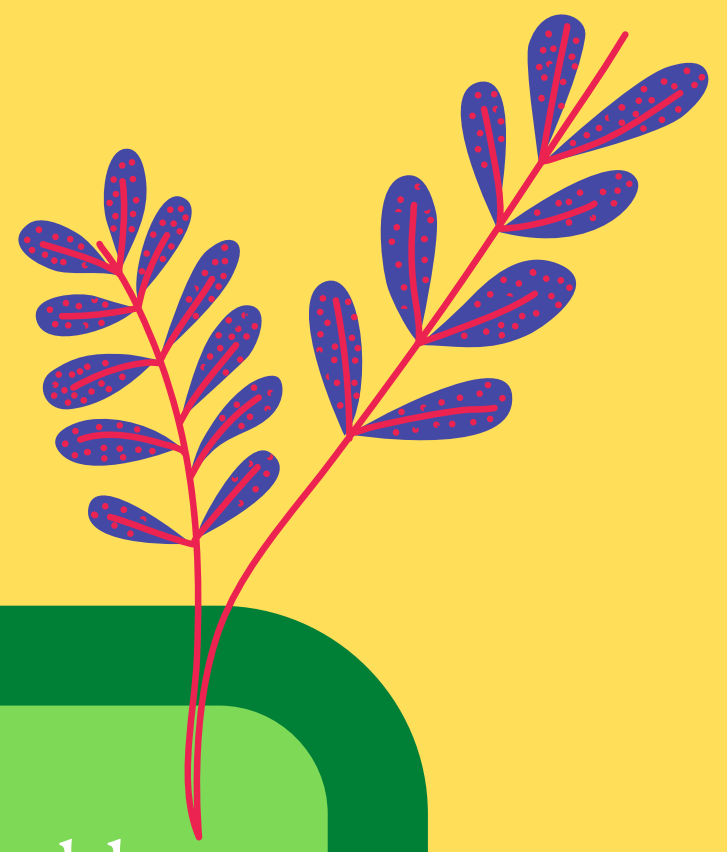


Friday Night Open Mic



it's friday night in april at book show / the shelves hold wrinkled, word-scented pages & books by local poets i know / a psychic hides behind a curtain in the back / a corner displays crystals, tarot cards, & palo santo / it's friday & it's open mic night / the host begins / by reading from her memoir / her voice like wind beneath my kite wings / she's a sagittarius / she's fire / she shares how she crossed the border, how she listened to madonna, how she fled a civil war / we're both immigrants / disconnected from the countries that birthed us / gripped by the tentacles of america / she's frank / raw / so honest the floor beneath my feet feels unreal / once a month, i take the train to book show, addicted to how her words bite my ankles / we drink wine / laugh / & laugh / hug / hug so hard i remember i'm alive / she's still wind but i'm less kite, more balloon / soaring across an expanse of brilliant blue & scorching sun / i float & float / we are both mothers / we don't have children / we are mothers of ourselves & our words / in august, i am the featured poet / i'm not afraid of the mic / not like i was my first night / when i stumbled on letters & gasped for breath / tonight i breathe / & breathe / she's there smiling / my story / her story / our stories / it's been less than year / but i think we've known each other since birth / i'm now neither kite nor balloon / i'm a bird, learning to fly / because she showed me my wings aren't clipped



Karo Ska