

DEADLINES AND DIVINE DISTRACTIONS

Kaveh Akbar
Somewhere in the air, 2018

Spoiling the average / Letter to Lydia

you looked so good
when you were liquid-
crystal your electrons
popcorning around
like little moons

 your
 childhood was
over I was picking blood
oranges in January safe
as a lifejacket floating in
bathwater

 your secrets
have stayed secrets with
me not because I'm honest
but because I forgot
them immediately though
I do remember once
you told me *the human race*
implies a finish line

 it's lovely
how easy it still is to feel
lovely in this specific
way

 it's been
 days since
I've kept my mouth shut
about anything
you would've hated
seeing me like this

 everything
I say disappoints either
my family or my
corporate sponsors

it's getting harder
by the hour to tell
the difference

 one
 immortal soul
spoils the average
for everyone it reminds
us the whole game
is rigged

 I pacify myself
with my sounds my stories
you liked the one
about the horse
breaking free from
his chariot then starving
in the cold

 remember
washing paint from
your brushes in
the pond near my
brother's house you left
before all the fish
died I'm not saying
it was your paints but
good luck trying to prove
it wasn't from where
you are now