SLIGHTLY LESS STRESSFUL WALK UP HILL

How do you hope to survive?

& not just that: was it even the question?

By midday the fog was burning off;

screech & call beside the anyway::: :: the parent osprey had gone out looking for the right fish

(did it fear stone?) & bryophytes rested on the soil

as the soul might rest on the what ifs—;

you were trying not to waste poetry’s time on stupid questions,

all the you’s going along out there tired

going through meetings—

never enough sleep even if you nap at the office—

checking the phone tiny electrons of joy,

messages from large specific you, small specific you, large general you,

pressure filled colleagues

whose healing had not occurred but still might...

Tech certainly hadn’t helped; chlorpyrifos::—
cities eking out funds, people sleeping in tents

with black & white dogs & children;

racist prisons—you’re getting numb to the list—“growth in the service sector—”

women working three jobs—production of power

& that tone in the profit voices when you call customer service

growing slightly more officious suspecting the next “downturn”—

you wake with nano-minutes of stress built up overnight—

offshore breezes, fear of fires—

mosses bunched , , , , , , , , , near the small oaks (did they fear stone?)

Women had experimented for centuries with too much cortisol —

so, what to do now, since doing was the problem— It was just

mainly important to get through the day

with the minutes moving roundly, rather than lengthwise—

Surely one note could be singled out
—for example :: :: the screech of the baby osprey,
& the nest waiting, heavy with proudlings —;

perhaps a calm could be entered (like cooked fog

or a monarch butterfly coming through looking like John Clare
across the enclosures—)

,, on the other side of the highway steel tubes of dairy trucks
were grinding along—

the milk sloshing inside
& besides that the hope of

the circular spirits bringing a map of formless order

where a legendary love was taking place, beyond control

(forthcoming in Ploughshares)  

for MW