

Halloween Tree

Shards of moonlight light up your bark and the gravitas of your girth whip us into silence.

‘Respect’, you whistle in the cool breeze.

They aptly name you, ‘Old Nobbley’. Wooded arthritic fingers encircle us, some fractured, or twisted, covered in warts- like the skin of the dispossessed during the plague. Others, trained here, routing for blood and war. Lovers have stabbed their initials into your flesh and others tried to burn you. You watched it all and survived.

Did you refuse to bend your bows to the Lords who once owned this land, and wail to a soulful moon when your sister and brother’s were slain. All grown together, ever since their acorns hit the soil? Maybe their ghosts now haunt the pews of nearby churches? The bells drowning the laughter of human saplings.

Did you hear the talk of marginalised women of Mistley assembled here and watch them snatched away to a filthy cell to face accusations of witchcraft and death? Do they still curl in the cavern of your open belly returning their souls to your womb?

How many children- now turned to dust -have snuggled here since?

Together we hold hands, circling your trunk, chanting our calls to the dead to return and commune with us. We press our faces against your bark, in hope of messages from the departed and to share your wisdom.

You search your constant heart and creak out through aching branches a warning of the atrocities of human kind.