Hollowed pilgrims and howling aberrations alike do trek that harrowing path
To watch the hapless insects swarm and suffocate
the grumbling earth of that unholy site is to understand decay and depravity
in all their myriad forms

And if you, O Woeful Spirit, wish to pass beyond this virulent threshold,
this chokepoint of catastrophe between worlds,
then you would do well to stain your memory with this simple mite of forewarning:
Beware the Trees

Passage through this Valley of Perdition is quite the simple task
should you keep your eyes between your knees as the neophytes do
But not you.

You have been burdened with the scornful indignation of your own inquisition.
For when you enter the maw of that sickly fissure you will surely see them.

At first you will think of them to be teeth,
Gnashing at their meal,
but quickly you will learn them to be dexterous and conniving.
For those trees are the fingers of the damned,
the trampled,
piercing the poor black soil.
They will claw and scrape at your periphery until you haven’t the slightest agency against them
And once you witness their deranged grasping, you will understand
The depths to which your hopeless prospects have fallen.
And by each measure you sink, those knobby wooden digits will reach higher into the sky
Their canopy,
an inverse starlight,
will blind your unwitting eyes.

Only to be restored once you gaze upon the Monolith:

The thick, stoney Tesseract which stands in defiance of the world’s will,
displacing and distorting the reflections of the fading light
If any spirit was left in you, the Monolith demands it
as tribute for your invitation to walk its foetid pass
And so you will march solemnly towards it,
another soul to its infinite phylactery

But first, you will be met by those violent machinations
The stabbing metal spindles
That stand in twisted delight for the sole purpose of rending flesh from bone
And they will surely have yours

Of all the horrors which await you these metallic imposters are the most malicious
But before you can shift your abused oculus in their direction you will first hear them.
They speak in screeching whispers
and wavelength distortions
that burrow deep within your unguarded psyche.
In hushed static they will tell you the most heinous things you will never comprehend
And once the mind has been thoroughly shattered they will reveal themselves:

~ The Trees ~

Winding willows capped in black dread and clangorous lead
Mechanical mimicry which mocks ancient ents
And as you gaze upon them they will begin:

Slowly they will disassemble you,
flaying the flesh with elated precision,
prepping the body for unwillful extraction of the soul.
And as you are torn asunder you will witness them truly,
for it is the last thing to witness.

You will take careful note to dissect them as they do you
You will see the perversion of the natural form and the unholy cruelties of iron
You will notice the pins and nails which stake these monsters through
and the chalky forlornness of their weather-beaten braces.

And finally,
as you are swallowed altogether,
you will see it
You will see their soft wooden cores
And for the briefest of moments you will understand
You will understand why they must exact this pain

This toll is theirs because they paid it first
And with this final revelation you will greet
the Further

###