Plants by Olive Senior

Plants are deceptive. You see them there looking as if once rooted they know their places; not like animals, like us always running around, leaving traces.

Yet from the way they breed (excuse me!) and twine, from their exhibitionist and rather prolific nature, we must infer a sinister not to say imperialistic grand design. Perhaps you've regarded, as beneath your notice, armies of mangrove on the march, roots in the air, clinging tendrils anchoring themselves everywhere?

The world is full of shoots bent on conquest, invasive seedlings seeking wide open spaces, matériel gathered for explosive dispersal in capsules and seed cases.

Maybe you haven't quite taken in the colonizing ambitions of hitchhiking burrs on your sweater, surf-riding nuts bobbing on ocean, parachuting seeds and other airborne traffic dropping in. And what about those special agents called flowers? Dressed, perfumed, and made-up for romancing insects, bats, birds, bees, even you –

– don't deny it my dear, I've seen you sniff and exclaim. Believe me, Innocent, that sweet fruit, that berry, is nothing more than ovary, the instrument to seduce you into scattering plant progeny. Part of a vast cosmic program that once set in motion cannot be undone though we become plant food and earth wind down.

They'll outlast us, they were always there one step ahead of us: plants gone to seed, generating the original profligate, extravagant, reckless, improvident, weed.