

## 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.