

by Maryoy Stoneman Douglas

I Am The Mangrove.

I am the mangrove.

I build.

Quietly, quietly, through the blazing days,
Through the breathing nights, I thrust my grey roots,
Building.

Under the great sky
My leaves are lavish.

But down in the dark water, the quiet water
The brown water, my roots arch, moving
Steadfastly.

The winds move,
But I move not.

I buttress myself with toughness,
I reach my roots down into the roots of things,
Foundations.

The waters move,
But I move not.

Day by day the shining brown ripples stir in my shadows,
Night by night the dark tides tug and lift at my arches
Impotently.

Silently, silently,
Out of sea refuse,

Out of the blown sea weed, the beach grass, the mud,
Out of the flotsam and jetsam of the winds and the waters,
I build.

I build
Striding.

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Behind me grows a barrier, woven of my roots,
Behind me advances the armies of the conquering grass,
Dry footed.

I shout my challenge,

Silently, silently.

I stride triumphant.

Buffeted, victorious, out across shallows, out to the
sea ways.

I am the pioneer, I am the forerunner, I am the adventurer.

After me comes earth.

I am the mangrove.

Look.

I build.