

YVONNE ZIPTER

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Blue Wild Indigo

I have long admired their dark oval bodies,  
wagging like chow tongues in the breeze.  
Yet for all the pods' deep bruise of color  
it's the plant's modest, green elliptical leaves,  
with their secret concentrations of indican  
(tryptophan's less sleepy cousin),  
that yield the dye prized, once, by shamans,  
slavers, rag traders, and kings, the powder  
that was *more powerful than the gun*,  
that was worth, in a length of cloth,  
a human body. It's the pod's interior, though,  
that's the real marvel to me, seeds lined up  
like piglets at suckle, like rowers in a scull,  
like socks in a gentleman's drawer, like  
footlights glowing golden against the pod's  
black backdrop, ready to illuminate the next  
stage of their cycle: heroes of their own story.  
The two halves of a pod rest side by side on my desk  
like pages of an open book about some captives  
making their escape in two rough-hewn boats.

Italicized words are quoted from *Indigo: In Search of the Color That Seduced the World* by Catherine E McKinley (Bloomsbury 2011).

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Yvonne Zipter is the author of *The Patience of Metal* (Hutchinson House 1990), *Ransacking the Closet* (Spinsters Ink 1995), and *Like Some Bookie God* (Pudding House Publications 2007). Her work has also appeared in *Poetry*, *Southern Humanities Review*, *Fogged Clarity*, *Spoon River Poetry Review*, and *Crab Orchard Review*. Creator of the poetry vending machine and a retired manuscript editor, she lives in Chicago, Illinois. Online at [www.facebook.com/YvonneZipterWrites](http://www.facebook.com/YvonneZipterWrites).

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