

Critique of Pure Reason

When I met you, I turned you over and over in my head,
trying to know what you meant.

Once, looking at you, a word
wrote itself on my mind.

The sense we make of things
(space, time, causation)
is, according to Kant,
a function of the mind's ordering impulse,
rather than a function of the world.

What is this? I said. You said, *I'll tell you what
it isn't.*

Kant's early work deals exclusively
with hurricanes and winds.

Your talk is like religion.
It means everything and nothing.

Act without regard to any end, Kant instructs.
*Act as if the maxim of your action
were to become through your will a general law.*

The maxims of your actions were terrifying.

You told me you had sex for the first time when you were five.

That's not sex, I said.

It felt like sex.

Silence. Wind lifting the leaves outside.

Central to *The Critique of Pure Reason* is Kant's belief
in the unknowableness of things in themselves.

The word was: pain.

I am painting you a picture, you said.