

## *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.