

# A Covered Bridge in Littleton, New Hampshire

By Stephanie Burt

I can remember when I wanted X  
more than anything ever—for X fill in  
from your own childhood

[balloon, pencil lead, trading card, shoelaces, a bow  
or not to have to wear a bow]

and now I am moved to action, when I am moved,  
principally by a memory of what to want.

The point is to be, in your own eyes, what you are,  
  
or to keep your own tools, so that you can pretend.

And so it was no surprise,  
to me at least, when Cooper, who is two,  
collapsed in *fortissimo* fits when he could not have  
a \$20, three-foot-long stuffed frog  
in the image of Frog from *Frog and Toad*, since he is Toad.

That morning, needing a nap,  
he had thrown, from the third-story balcony  
of Miller's Cafe and Bakery, into the whistling  
rapids and shallows  
of the Ammonoosuc River, with its arrowheads and caravans of stones,  
his Red Sox cap. His hair was shining like  
another planet's second sun,  
as he explained, looking up, "I threw my hat in the river.  
I would like my hat back now."

Stephanie Burt, "A Covered Bridge in Littleton, New Hampshire" from *Advice from the Lights*. Copyright © 2017 by Stephanie Burt. Reprinted by permission of Graywolf Press, [www.graywolfpress.org](http://www.graywolfpress.org).