

# THE CODE BETWEEN US

*for Jackie*

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Past one o'clock  
my brain switched over to coyote time

snow darkening the streetlights  
a drug breathing somnolence  
through the streets of the city.

The calm outside a focal point  
for the energy I spent  
all along the day choosing gifts

how more alien I felt with each  
passing dollar, wondering if  
the piano music I bought for X

would be romantic enough or if  
the plate for Y was just the right colour,  
the man behind the counter  
wrapping it so carefully as it passed

from his hands into mine while I tried to imagine  
what it might look like in your apartment,  
tried to think with your eyes about beauty

and the small pleasure I thought would  
come into the code between us,  
our year on year museum of artifacts

an anthropology of our own lives  
for the record, for the language we create

when this ritual is unwrapped.

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Robert John Charles Gore · 1958–2026

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