



1998

Birthday Package

Eric Freeze

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Birthday Package

Eric Freeze

On our front
step yesterday, I found a bag
like a mini green paper dolmen
offering cookies in plastic wrap,
five-flavor lifesavers and a note
that said, "Have a peachy birthday, Kris."
Curly blue handwriting.

Kris doesn't live here.
Just old dishes he left,
two cream plates chipped on the side and
a can of peach halves—
peeled and pitted.

Though I've never met the man,
Kris gets great mail—
He's a preferred customer at "Haney's Big and Tall."
I've opened letters from 6 different countries
including Andorra, Japan, and Bulgaria.
Popular Science still comes on Tuesdays,
which I usually read on the jon.

I wonder why Kris left.
He didn't leave a forwarding address.
I keep expecting that he'll show up—
a large man with plastic square-rim glasses
And a beard like Castro.
He'll knock twice, loud and heavy;
I'll invite him into the living room.
He'll look over at the shrine of
envelopes and magazines on our coffee table,
want to tell me why he left,
show where he slept,
how the front room was arranged.
Then he'll leave—
his mail,
still scattered on the coffee table.
I won't press him,
won't probe.
He has a right
to his privacy anyway.