

CHRISTMAS, OR WAS IT A BIRTHDAY

One odd, light packet is left. Others held marzipan pigs, some scented soap, a tie traversed by small camels (that from a wish list). Gifts from the small people in our life, pushed shyly into reach, but with fever in the eye. The felt-tip marker label says "Pappa this is for you I hope you like my gift." Praise just feeds on this longing, primps. She's ready to hug this child. But I, who never learned to loose her naturally, examine the packet's folds and taped bulges, unwrap one layer of crepe, shake, say it is definitely not something to eat. The silk paper then rips to show the polyurethane pencil-holder — holes punched for pencils, sized for markers, even a neat slit for a letter opener. Held in place by tacks, a paisley fabric apron hides the plastic. I couldn't praise it enough then, but it still sits on my desk.