

5-1-2000

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Recommended Citation

Harbaugh, Liz (2000) "The Shapes of Fate (Part One)," *Hieroglyphics: the NSU University School Literary Magazine*: Vol. 7 , Article 7.
Available at: https://nsuworks.nova.edu/uschool_litmag/vol7/iss1/7

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The Shapes of Fate

(Part One)

Liz Harbaugh

September 26, 2004
Shrewsbury, England

"Sheep! Look! Stop the car! Where's the camera?"

Matthew grins at me, rolls his eye, and pulls the car off onto the shoulder. The chilly autumn weather has turned his nose the color of cherry Chap Stick, but his dark eyes retain their humour and warmth. His freckles stand out across his cheeks and his thick black hair is—as usual—cut too short, exposing his ears, red from cold. He pulls the camera out of his coat pocket and jokingly holds it just out of my reach.

"Uh uh—who do you love most and best in the whole wide world?"

"You—of course you. Who else?" I stammer.

He eyes me as though I'm dangerous, as though he knows how close I am to losing it, breaking down, and running off. Then he grins, warily, yet lovingly.

"Go take a picture of the stupid sheep!"

I sigh with relief and climb out of the car. *He could love me . . . he could*, I muse, as I marvel at the simple beauty of the English countryside. Covered with both a lush green grass and a cold wet rain, the hills are an ominous meeting ground of life and death. Wispy fog clouds settle on the slopes like sheep after grazing—the sky is a most peculiar shade, a steely grey that lends a flattening air to the scenery. I shiver in my woolen peacoat and turn my attention towards the photo.

Matthew leans out the car window and catcalls, "Hey, crazy tourist girl, you wanna hustle?"

(to be continued . . .)