

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Max Heinegg: Three Poems

Max Heinegg · Tuesday, February 17th, 2026

### Shepherd

To the doctors of Grace Cottage, VT, who tended to my mother

The good man takes the woman's hand to say  
 he has done this before  
 and will again  
 make the passage easier  
 and looking to me  
 with what wisdom I cannot help  
 but notice, in an age when we do not  
 dare to touch the dying,  
 how he does.

\*

### False Fall

A drought at the end of summer tricks  
 red maples into an early costume change.  
 We aren't supposed to be here either.

Warning signs hang nailed to the trunks  
 on the ambled trail to the reservoir  
 where teens swim and bougie dogs bathe.

To try and love our life despite the bitter  
 simultaneities. This week, for our students,  
 funerals instead of vacation. Car crashes,

hit by adult drivers, exhausted or drunk.  
 Savage luck, young bodies in the wrong space  
 and time. In our family, your tough mother

heading to chemo, to stay as long as she can.  
 My mother, choosing not to suffer, asking me

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to bring her to Vermont for legal dignity.

Today, our children leave again for college,  
may the house stay a nest. Aging, loved  
our black cat stares down the frost

from the warm side of a bay window.

\*

## Two Months Before She Would Pass

On a walk around the outside of the pool  
in Schenectady's Central Park  
she took my arm and said  
*I am holding you  
because you're here*

which I tried to take as  
because we were still here,  
but I knew it meant I was  
the only one there to hold.

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(Featured image from *Pexels*)

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