

Nishike

By: Rebecca Pelky

For a long time I felt  
Guilty about the desire  
To be alone.  
My mother's mantra of grandchildren  
Like generations of elders with  
Paper thin skin steering my hips  
Toward the human race.  
Single, in nature,

Is a thing at which we would point  
In awe. Snap photos, or touch someone  
On the shoulder and breathe,  
Look, isn't it stunning.

One red wildflower in spring runoff.  
One naked maple in a mown field.  
Spotted Elk dead in the snow.

When Europeans first came to this continent  
They took the Indians' land.  
Founding fathers. Jefferson, Jackson  
Said if they didn't know how to own it  
If they didn't cultivate it with cotton  
Or tobacco but only hunted and fished,  
Didn't work but only lived,  
If they lived  
They didn't deserve to have it.

Every night now I wake up  
And my hands tucked under my pillow  
Are numb.