

Tamiko Beyer

## When the WTO Came to Town

*Seattle, 1999*

When the WTO came to town  
my period came too  
and you and I met again.  
The city shut down  
glass spilled the sidewalks  
and I left a trail of blood.

The sky filled with protest signs  
and above them, doves of pigeons rode the air  
and above them, helicopters barreled  
between the tips of skyscrapers.

I'd never seen so many guns  
riding snugly in black holsters  
so many billy clubs, handcuffs,  
so much glinting riot gear.

I'd never seen so many people  
so many people so many  
people jamming the streets  
jamming in the streets  
even as they were beaten  
even as the horses snorted, pawed the ground  
even as we swam through plumes of tear gas

so many people in the streets  
and I among them, releasing  
sweet rich blood from my body  
—a body among bodies—  
my hand in yours

navigating the swift  
harrowing stream of history.