The Cold Hand of Death
(A narrative in one-syllable words)
by Phyllis Wilcox

She rode down that same street night by night and it was in that same spot that the cold hand of death grabbed at her each time. She could feel her hair stand on end on the back of her neck as she drove by that spot where the lake and sky seemed to meet and left a cold, dark, black hole each night. Ice cold were the depths of the lake down to the right of her. The edge of the road went straight down to the lake, a lake that could be cruel when it raged in a storm and as smooth as glass on a late spring night. Most nights she passed free from the grips of that ice cold hand, but on that late March night her luck would not be with her.

Her class let out late that night. Clouds passed in front of the half moon with a stiff wind that blew straight off the lake. Waves hit the shore as spray from them went high in the air. That chill wind cut through her like a knife as she fought her way to the car park. A cold rain fell on the hood as she turned the key on, and she could see that it froze where it fell. If she did not start soon the roads would be too slick to drive on. She turned on the main road—her hands were tight on the wheel, her arms stiff with fear. The night was black as black can be. There were just a few cars on the road that night—with the storm the T.V. had warned would come—most men and beasts were tucked up for the night to wait it out.

One of the few cars that she met came right at her—she could not tell where she was on the road but that cold, dark hand was there at the spot where sky and lake mixed. That was where she was on the road, on one side a car with bright lights and to her right, the lake, down a ways, but so close that the spray from its waves mixed with the rain. The rail was weak on the side of the road, the waves had caused it to rust. Her car hit on its side and turned toward the lake...suddenly she fell into that black, dark void. The ice-cold hand gripped her. She could feel the cold black of the lake take her, the waves were in a rage as they dragged her down, deep to the end of her life. In those last few ticks of time she had left, she thought through the haze of fear how her one great fear had come to claim her—the ice-cold hand of death was the lake.