



Little White Rabbit

A little white rabbit runs through the wood
He just passed his quals and his spirits are good
His thesis topic proposal is almost complete
But he's being observed as a piece of fresh meat
From the bushes along overgrown forest path
Jumps a hungry rottweiler, with tenure in math
He did not publish lately and thus got no raise
Anger, malice and envy are distorting his face

When the scary rottweiler appears so near
Poor little white rabbit starts shaking with fear
Dear sir, I don't mean to sound imprudent
Please spare my life, I'm a PhD student
Only 3 years of funding and I work like a mole
Plus, my lab is a dingy and dark rabbit-hole
If you have any doubts that my story is true
I can show my research conditions to you

His hunger subsides and the dog starts to laugh
This must be a joke, you're not tough enough
Your voice is so squeaky, you have no strong core
A true doctoral student must be a carnivore
I'll indulge you this once; go and show me your lab
If you lied, I'll eat you and go drink at the pub
So, they amble along until reaching a stump
Next to which is a hole, and it looks like a dump

Down some rickety stairs they slowly descend
Into dingy and dark, but quite large, rabbit den
While dog's eyes are adjusting to lack of light
He sees broken equipment, trash strewn left and right
In the middle of all this, sits on a large throne
A huge grizzled lion who is chewing a bone
It's not hard to imagine what happened then
Hungry rottweiler's tenure came to an end

As befits any story that ends well but starts dire
There must be a moral that will readers inspire
Your size doesn't matter and neither does voice
Furthermore, thesis topic is a trivial choice
A dark and cold lab with doors that don't lock
Has no bearing at all on where you'll be a post-doc
For what's important there is but one choice
Your advisor matters and all else is noise