

# 'Twas the Night Before the Qualifying Exam Deadline

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'Twas the night before deadline and all through the floor,  
Not a creature was stirring except for a poor  
Second year grad student, working away,  
His "Qual Exam" write-up was due the next day.

"Just finishing touches," he said with a yawn,  
"And then I can take a short nap before dawn."  
The spell check was run several times with great care,  
And now he was checking each "there," "their," and "they're."

When what to his wandering mind did appear  
But a horrible thought and it caused him great fear.  
His qual exam topic was logically flawed!  
He hammered and stammered, he hemmed and he hawed.

A flaw fundamental, his project was dead!  
As visions of "failure" danced round in his head.  
He thought "I must rewrite my research design."  
But what could replace it? There wasn't much time.

Then suddenly up in his head rose a clatter.  
Out popped an idea that said "What's the matter?  
Why are you so glum, why are you so blue?  
Just add some genetics, it's easy to do."

"Create a new mouse, the genes will go mix-in,  
Cross DANS/r on PRANS/r on COM/it on BLITZ/n.  
Just keep right on crossing f1 and f2  
Until you have got a mouse strain that is new."

"Why thank you idea" the grad student said,  
Not thinking he'd spoke to a voice in his head.  
"You've given me hope and now I can go on."  
With that he proceeded to work until dawn.

And just as the first rays of light were approaching  
The idea told him "I'm done with my coaching.  
You've gotten a start now, it won't be much more  
Until you've rewritten aims two, three, and four."

"And now" the idea said "I have to leave.  
There's others to help on this qual exam eve."  
The last words he spoke faded out in the sky  
"Good luck on your test, may you pass it first try."

