A dissertator's haiku, tanka, and senryu:

**ALL but CICADAS**

STEPHANIE S SHIH
All but Cicadas.
A dissertator’s
haiku, tanka, and senryu:

All but Cicadas.

Stephanie S Shih
The following poems were composed over the course of thesis writing, mostly during the summer of two thousand and thirteen.
Grad school has sucked all the words out of me.
I am left with just three lines.
A dissertator's cries crash silent upon the stone-eared committee.
Sometimes I think of all I haven't yet finished. *hyperventilates*
IV.

On conference abstracts

Abstract accepted!
Crap—now I actually
have to do the work.
V.

Corpus work

Dear natural data:
Why am I so constantly cleaning up your mess?
When my statistics confirm my hypothesis:
Victory is mine!

VI.

_The white whale_

When my statistics confirm my hypothesis:
Victory is mine!
I kinda want to kick you if your article isn’t on the net. But I guess I’ll settle for just not citing you instead.

**VII.**

*Research in the digital age*

I kinda want to kick you if your article isn’t on the net. But I guess I’ll settle for just not citing you instead.
Furiously slow, I deconstruct, reconstruct. Writing over and over and over and over and over again. Sigh.

**VIII.**

*Writing a frustrating section*

Furiously slow, 
I deconstruct, reconstruct. 
Writing over and 
over and over and over again. Sigh.
Committee meeting.
Like winter: bone-chillingly cold, and far too long.
X.

*Literature review*

The literature is too vast. Cannot poss’bly summarize it all.

That god for *inter alia*, *e.g.*, and (my fav) *et seq.*
The literature written before is vast. But, let's get to the point.
XII.

*Imperatives from the advisor:*
*8 August 2013*

“Schedule your defense!”
“Just turn in a crummy draft!”
“Revise it later!”
Once, I asked Kie Zuraw how she does it all. Her one tip for academic survival: “Lower all of your expectations.”

How to (A reverse tanka)

Once, I asked Kie Zuraw how she does it all. Her one tip for academic survival: “Lower all of your expectations.”
Norvin Richards, on finishing dissertations

Richards, to me: “You don’t finish a thesis. You just run out of time.”
MFK Fisher said: "Let your words go. They'll soon be wrapped 'round dead fish."

(Or, they'll soon be scratch paper for drawing OT tableaux.)
Dear Frank Harrell: Thanks but no thanks for rms. Bring back Design, please?

XVI.

*Technological unadvancements*

Dear Frank Harrell: Thanks but no thanks for rms. Bring back Design, please?
Why is it always
that coffee I drink at 9
never hits ‘til 3?

#superhypercaffeinatedexpialidocious

The drip

Why is it always
that coffee I drink at 9
never hits ‘til 3?

#superhypercaffeinatedexpialidocious
XVIII.

*Things that make me happy while dissertating: 16 August 2013*

Emails from colleagues about music and cronuts; citing stats papers;
Mottled light; working outside with a good friend from SD.
XIX.

*On surviving the dissertation defense (advice from Nathan Schneider)*

“Bake something sticky for your committee, so they won’t be able to utter their criticisms. Caramel should do the trick.”
XX.

Sunday, 6AM:
Morning stillness, outside and on my gchat list.
Wondering if my committee will throw a fit if I don't report p-values for mixed models? It's the principle of it.
XXII.

The never-ending chapter, 1

Fifty-four pages
(single-spaced), and still not done.
One-chapter thesis?
XXIII.

*The never-ending chapter, 2*

Fifty-five pages (single-spaced), and still I’ve got three whole sections more.
XXIV.

The never-ending chapter, 3

Fifty-six pages,
Section 6.3.4.
Deep breath, and... ...go!
A wondrous thing, this full night's sleep! I'd forgotten what it's like to dream.

**On sleep**

A wondrous thing, this full night's sleep! I'd forgotten what it's like to dream.
Trees fall in silence.
I do not exist between
the moments with you.

XXVI.
XXVII.

Things that make me happy while dissertating: 26 August 2013

Facebook photos from colleagues of cronut shops named “La Cornetteria.”
I don’t understand people who work on trains. Trains are for day dreaming.

**XXVIII.**

*BKY → DAV*

I don’t understand people who work on trains. Trains are for day dreaming.
XXIX.

Inception

Rob pointed out that Chapter 4 is a thesis within a thesis.
While I sleep, the elves in my computer test my maximal random intercepts and slopes for me.
Thank you for your hard work, elves.

XXX.
Flat tire, burst pipe, travel logistics, and still no housing for Fall.

Dissertation distractions on a Friday morning

Flat tire, burst pipe, travel logistics, and still no housing for Fall.
XXXII.

*Speed*

Med school friend writes three pages in the time I write one paragraph. #sad
Today's diversion:
argument on facebook re:
“kugelhopf” spelling.

Google-hupf
Worried cause I don't have a theoretical implementation.

Upon hearing Matt's defense

Worried cause I don't have a theoretical implementation.
It's quite hard not to feel like a constant failure when I'm thesis-ing.
Incomplete drafts and incomplete thoughts and incomplete senryu and

Not finished yet

Incomplete drafts and incomplete thoughts and incomplete senryu and
Perks of the dissertation diet

Why, hello, awesome pair of designer jeans from the start of grad school.

(Seriously, I should patent this thesis weight loss diet.)
XXXVIII.

*The magic trick*

in which I’ll now pull a dissertation out of thin air in a week.
As Jen Hay once said, “Don’t worry. We specialize in miracles here.”

XXXIX.

Upon hearing that I only have 48 hours in which to produce a full draft

As Jen Hay once said, “Don’t worry. We specialize in miracles here.”
That glimmer of glee whenever I spot typos in published papers.

Scholarly Schadenfreude

That glimmer of glee whenever I spot typos in published papers.
The cake is a lie.

Cake, and grief counsel, will be available at the end of the test.

#parallelsbetweenPortal anddissertationwriting
XLII.

*Every. single. year.*

It’s "100 words or fewer." *not* "100 words or less," damnit!

re: the LSA abstract notification email.
It's true what they say

You never know what your dissertation's about until the very end.
Dear Santa, My Christmas List:

Model convergence,
A finished chapter, and news
from the job market.

XLIV.
XLV.

LSA 2014

Clues your talk was good:
Mark Liberman's there and says after: "Hey, good talk."
I would not make a good academic because I HATE REVISIONS.
XLVII.

\textit{Can't stop}

So desperate to finish that I'm listening to Miley Cyrus.
XLVIII.

*The meat market*

*Relief:* the one and only emotion I feel upon job success.
XLIX.

*Unfortunate fact of life*

No matter how great the accomplishment, merit still can’t buy one love.
On Pi Day, 2014

Filed! In one word,
How I plan to celebrate
having finished: sleep.
And now, the sequel:
(Euphemistically)
*The Merry Stroll to Tenure.*