A love poem for statisticians

(with apologies to Browning, Burns, Keats, Shelly, Shakespeare, and YOU, among others...)

Jason W. Osborne

Forward

It was February 14, 1998, love was in the air, and I was at the end of many long years of graduate study. To be specific, I was immersed in endless hours of writing and editing the final draft of my dissertation. My dissertation defense was imminent, as were several job interviews. My wife and young son were out of town visiting family so that I could concentrate,[1] and I was left with only our Dalmatian, Beanie, for company.

After about 10 hours of immersion in my writing, I stopped to take the dog for a walk. The world of statistics and research met the "real" world celebrating[2] Valentine's Day, and bits of the following poem began rattling around my brain pan. I cannot explain what possessed me to compose this travesty against the arts and nature, and I remain deeply remorseful over this thoroughly terrible work. Thankfully, I have gainful employment that does not currently involve creative writing.

Enjoy, and definitely *do not* give it to anyone you really care deeply about.

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[1] And more importantly, from their perspective, get a paying job
[2] Or cursing, depending on their personal situation

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Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate,
at least within a 95% confidence interval.

Shall I compare thee to a rose?
I could statistically, I suppose.
For within the normal distribution of rose beauty ever seen,
your z-score exceeds three point thirteen!

Shall I compare thee to a tree?
I certainly can, empirically (though perhaps inadvisedly).
For tho a tree is rarely tantalizing,
I know that by factor analyzing
iteration after iteration,
I will find some combination of traits that flatter reliably.

If I could write the beauty of your eyes,
and in fresh numbers number your graces,
the multivariate comparison would certainly show your eyes and graces
exceed that of other mortals with a p-value significant to at least three places!

My love for you grows ever stronger,
of this you can be certain,
for in analyzing the data as our relationship goes ever longer,
my within-subjects repeated measures analysis of variance analyzing changes in love quotient as
      a function of time
reveals significant pairwise comparisons increasing linearly!