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Generative Artificial Intelligence

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A02: P+7 Oulipian Language Modeling

Overall, this was an extremely amusing exercise and a genuinely fun way to learn how language modeling works, not only through code but through probability and experimentation. Altering the x value in the P+x experiment completely changed the tone and coherence of the poem. When I used lower values, the changes were very subtle and almost too respectful of the original text. The poem felt only slightly off, which made it interesting, but not whimsical or surprising enough.

As I increased the value to P+25, the output became much more unexpected and strange. Words like *sand*, *steel*, and *sword* replaced the natural imagery from the original poem, shifting it from something quiet and nature-focused into something more industrial and surreal. That contrast is what made the poem funny. The grammar still made sense, but the overall meaning started to dissolve in a way that felt intentional rather than broken. Everything technically worked, but it constantly bordered on not making sense at all, which created a sense of humor through contradiction.

Through this assignment, I realized that modifying the x (or p) value directly controls how absurd the substitutions become. At P+25, I found a sweet spot where the poem was strange but still readable. Pushing the value too high, closer to P+45, resulted in total nonsense, while values closer to P+10 were too safe and boring. Finding a number I was satisfied with took a lot of trial and error, rerunning the code, and rereading the poem multiple times.

A big part of understanding this process involved working with tools like ChatGPT to debug and clarify how the code functioned. I had to prompt it multiple times, refine my instructions, and troubleshoot issues such as unfinished words and broken endings. If I were to implement a P+7 technique where all nouns are replaced, I would first identify nouns using part-of-speech tagging, then replace each with its seventh-highest probability alternative. This would destabilize the poem even further, since meaning would shift throughout the entire structure rather than only at the end of each line.