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Authorship, Originality, and Linguistic Merits in the Era of Artificial Intelligence

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Abstract

The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) in creative fields has sparked significant inquiry into authorship, originality, and linguistic performance. This research paper examines the linguistic divergences between human-authored and AI-generated texts, focusing on aspects such as vocabulary richness, syntactic complexity, coherence, and pragmatic appropriateness. Utilising comparative linguistic analysis, the study investigates selected texts from both sources, emphasising their grammatical structures, lexical choices, discourse organisation, and semantic precision. A thorough literature review surveys existing research on AI language generation, computational linguistics, and authorship attribution. The paper concludes by discussing the linguistic strengths and limitations of AI-generated texts and suggests avenues for further exploration in AI-assisted language production.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence (AI); Authorship; Automation; Computational Linguistics; Syntactic Complexity

INTRODUCTION

Artificial intelligence (AI) has increasingly permeated domains traditionally centred on human linguistic competence, marking a paradigm shift in our understanding of language generation and communication. Moving beyond mere automation of routine linguistic tasks, advanced AI systems such as ChatGPT, GPT-3, GPT-4, and Sudowrite now demonstrate the capacity to produce extended texts that approximate human linguistic output at the levels of syntax, lexis, and discourse organisation. This emergent capability raises critical questions within linguistics concerning the nature of language competence, pragmatic adequacy, and the mechanisms underlying coherent discourse construction. While AI-generated texts often exhibit grammatical accuracy and local coherence, their ability to replicate complex discourse features such as cohesive devices, register variation, genre-specific conventions, conversational implicature, and context-sensitive pragmatics remains an area of growing scholarly interest. Such distinctions are particularly salient for applied linguistics, discourse analysis, computational linguistics, and language pedagogy, where the authenticity, appropriateness, and communicative efficacy of AI-generated language are of both theoretical and practical concern. This study undertakes a systematic comparative analysis of AI-generated and human-authored texts, focusing on syntactic complexity, lexical diversity, coherence relations, pragmatic functionality, and discourse-level organisation. Additionally, the paper explores the ethical, pedagogical, and professional implications of AI-mediated language production, synthesises prior research, and proposes directions for future interdisciplinary inquiry into the evolving interface between human and artificial linguistic capabilities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Significant progress has been made by AI in the field of text creation, moving from simple rule-based systems to the complex deep learning models that characterise the present environment, including Chat GPT-3 and its offspring (Anders, T., 2023). Early text generation attempts were limited in their ability to produce creative or nuanced output due to their dependence on explicitly coded rules and established templates (Committee on Publication Ethics, 2023). But a new era was brought about by the development of machine learning and deep learning, especially neural networks and natural

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language processing (NLP) methods. These developments made it possible for AI models to examine enormous volumes of text, discover underlying patterns and structures, and then produce prose and poetry that more closely resembled writing by humans (Anders, T., 2023). When it comes to creative writing assignments, models such as GPT-3 have shown especially impressive skills, exhibiting the ability to generate cohesive and captivating narratives (Committee on Publication Ethics, 2023). This development highlights a distinct path towards AI systems that can increasingly and accurately mimic human speech. However, the basic principles underlying AI text generation continue to diverge significantly from the intricate cognitive processes that support human creativity and language expression, in sharp contrast to the true comprehension, emotional depth, and consciousness that underpin human writing.

AI learning is predicated on statistical probabilities and the identification of patterns within data. AI's role in authorship has sparked a great deal of discussion on the moral and legal implications of this technology, especially about copyright, originality, and the definition of "author" itself (Boden, M. A., 1998). The U.S. Copyright Office's position, which holds that copyright protection is only granted to works of human authorship, is a crucial element in this debate.

Additionally, groups like as the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) have argued that AI tools cannot be given credit as authors of academic papers, mainly because they are unable to take ownership of the work that is submitted (Esser, F., & Vliegenthart, R., 2017). Concerns about originality, plagiarism risk, and the wider ethical ramifications of using AI in creative writing projects support this viewpoint (Boden, M. A., 1998). In response to these changing problems, publishers and academic journals are increasingly being encouraged—and in certain situations, required—to disclose the use of AI in writing (Gao, Y., Wang, S., & Li, X., 2024). This illustrates a continuous attempt to manage the intricate relationship between existing ethical and legal norms in the field of authorship and technological innovation.

Although the dominant viewpoint in these frameworks emphasises human creativity as the foundation of authorship and copyright, the debate is still going on, especially with regard to the appropriate recognition of AI's role in the creative process and the required level of human involvement. Numerous linguistic elements and stylistic patterns have been analysed to determine the stylistic differences between text created by AI and that written by humans (Begus, 2023).

According to these studies, language generated by AI frequently displays formulaic linguistic structures, including familiar metaphorical constructions and stereotypical transitional markers. For example, the AI-generated poem that begins with "In shadows of silence, I find my name" demonstrates a reliance on conventional collocations, frequent use of alliteration, and highly generalised lexical items. While these features contribute to surface-level cohesion through predictable syntactic and semantic patterns, they lack the lexical richness, pragmatic depth, and sociocultural specificity observed in Ocean Vuong's "Aubade with Burning City." Vuong's poem exemplifies complex linguistic layering through fragmented syntax, context-dependent referentiality, and the use of culturally grounded semantic fields that engage readers on multiple interpretive levels.

Similarly, in narrative discourse, AI-generated texts often avoid intricate narrative perspectives that reflect complex cognitive and emotional states, instead defaulting to third-person exophoric reference. In "The Window Across the Street," the opening sentence — "Elena lived on the eighth floor of a building that echoed with forgotten names and closed doors" — demonstrates consistent use of third-person limited narration. The text maintains deictic distance by referring to the protagonist using proper nouns and third-person pronouns ("Elena," "she," "her"), with the narrator positioned externally to the character's internal state. This contrasts sharply with Zadie Smith's "The Embassy of Cambodia," where narrative voice integrates both external description and internal focalization, incorporating culturally situated discourse, pragmatic nuance, and subtle shifts in narrative perspective that reflect complex mental representations.

These instances illustrate how AI-generated discourse often manifests emotional and

experiential detachment, even when employing syntactically well-formed and stylistically polished language. According to studies on the linguistic characteristics of these texts, large language models (LLMs) frequently exhibit unique word choices and use present participial clauses and nominalisations more frequently than human writers (Hyland, K., 2002). Notably, research comparing scientific writing has shown that, in contrast to ChatGPT and other AI models, human scientists frequently employ lengthier paragraphs and more ambiguous language (Begus, N., 2023).

These discrepancies have been further supported by stylometric analysis, which focuses on the quantitative examination of writing style and shows distinct differences between AI and human writing based on word usage frequency (Jang, S. M., et al., 2021). Furthermore, it has been discovered that AI-generated writing occasionally lacks the correctness, depth, and specificity of source citing that define academic writing produced by humans (Köbis, N. C., & Mossink, L., 2021). On the other hand, AI tends to communicate in a more formal, objective, and straightforward manner, whereas human writing frequently demonstrates a more noticeable emotional and subjective component (LeCun, Y., Bengio, Y., & Hinton, G., 2015). These findings collectively suggest that while AI can effectively mimic certain aspects of human writing, discernible stylistic markers often remain, reflecting the underlying differences in how humans and AI process and generate language.

Scholarly research has also examined the thematic differences between literary texts produced by AI and humans, looking at elements like character development, emotional nuance, and symbolic complexity in addition to stylistic evaluations (Allado McDowell, K., 2020). According to research, AI is adept at reproducing goal-oriented and structured storytelling archetypes but struggles with psychologically complex and thematically ambiguous storylines (Mieczkowski, J., et al., 2021). Moreover, literature produced by AI has occasionally been shown to lack the coherence, consistency, and, most importantly, emotional depth that are frequently found in human creative writing (de Paoli, S., 2023). The nuanced comprehension, engagement with abstract concepts, and appreciation of cultural context that human critics and authors bring to literary analysis and creation are often lacking in AI, even though it can recognise and replicate some thematic elements within a text (Radford, A., et al., 2019).

Authorial Function in Linguistic Theory

By claiming that language itself, not the author's intention, creates meaning, Barthes (1967) transformed our understanding of literature. According to him, language is not the creation of a single author's mind once it is written; rather, it becomes "a tissue of quotations" derived from various linguistic and cultural settings. According to linguistic theory, intertextuality and common cognitive-syntactic structures, rather than personal intention, are what give a document its meaning.

Foucault (1969) makes a distinction between the person-author and the "author-function" in connected speech. The latter is a linguistic and cultural device that places restrictions on who can speak, what categories are used, and how a document is perceived. This emphasises how utterances are socially placed rather than coming from a stable speaker identity, which is consistent with pragmatics, the study of language use in context.

Media-Specific Discourse and Algorithmic Authorship

N. Katherine Hayles presents the concept of 'techno genesis', in which new forms of language and thought are jointly developed by digital systems and humans. This indicates that AI is not merely a neutral instrument from a linguistic perspective; rather, it modifies discourse coherence, grammatical structures, and lexical choice patterns in language formation. According to Hayles, the grammatical framing, pace, and rhetorical patterns of algorithmic and printed texts vary not just in medium but also in how they are interpreted by readers.

Computational Creativity: Towards or Beyond Language?

According to Colton & Wiggins (2012), creativity in the computational creativity area entails skill, appreciation, and imagination, all of which are quantifiable in language output. The next concern is whether texts produced by AI can replicate the pragmatic fluidity and semantic complexity seen in human language. While GPT-3/4 systems can reproduce surface-level cohesion and grammatical accuracy, empirical investigations

(Liu et al., 2021; Veale & Cook, 2018; Lamb et al., 2019) show that they frequently fall short in producing discourse coherence linked to experiential and cultural reference frames. Despite passing grammatical Turing tests, AI texts lack the pragmatic deixis and embodied nuance present in human language, making them pragmatically inactive scripts.

Reader-Response Framed as Pragmatic Interpretation

According to the survey studies by Kreminski et al. (2020) and Shaughnessy & DiPaola (2021), readers regularly ascribe more authenticity and affect to works written by humans, but they are unable to distinguish between AI and human writing. According to linguistic theory, the pragmatics of affect, such as indicators of subjectivity, attitude, and indexicality, are essential elements of communication, and AI is still not very good at mimicking these.

Ethical and Philosophical Considerations

Discussions on AI authorship also revolve around issues of ownership and intellectual property. Reports on the legal ramifications of AI-generated works have been released by the European Parliament and the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), which have pointed out the ambiguity surrounding copyright claims for machine-generated art. AI-generated works are in a legal limbo in most places where human artists are granted copyright protection. The possibility of AI plagiarising intentionally or unintentionally by replicating portions of its training data without giving due credit is another ethical worry. Furthermore, requests for stricter regulation and ethical frameworks have been sparked by worries about bias, cultural appropriation, and disinformation.

METHODOLOGY

The syntactic complexity, coherence, and pragmatic appropriateness of literary writings produced by humans and artificial intelligence are compared qualitatively in this study. Poetry and short fiction were the two main genres chosen. GPT-4 was used to generate AI-generated writings using prompts intended to elicit similar material. A small-scale reader response survey was also included in the study.

Thirty linguistic students and lovers were instructed to read a randomised selection of four texts, two of which were written by humans (one poem and one short story) and two of which were created by artificial intelligence (AI). They were not informed which was which. Each piece was evaluated according to its vocabulary richness, syntactic complexity, coherence, and pragmatic appropriateness.

Demographic Overview of Respondents

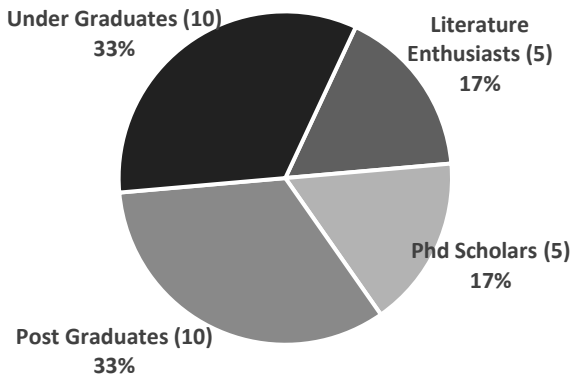

Figure 1: *Demographical Breakdown of Survey Respondents*

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Vocabulary Richness

Texts written by humans exhibit a more varied and complex vocabulary. In contrast to AI outputs, which typically use more general or mid-frequency words, they contain discipline-specific vocabulary, colloquial idioms, and culturally entrenched concepts. This disparity highlights how AI relies on its training corpus to learn vocabulary, lacking human creativity in word creation and cultural-linguistic innovation.

Syntactic Complexity

Human writing is characterised by intentional syntactic variation (e.g., fragments, parallelism, inversion), longer embedded clauses, and a balance between compound-complex and simple sentences. As a result of template-based development patterns rather than the varied structure present in human writing, AI-generated literature often has simpler, more consistent sentence structures by default, even when it is technically acceptable.

Coherence

Strong thematic continuity and logical progression are maintained in human-authored writings; concepts develop with depth and clarity

by utilising rhetorical structure and world knowledge. Even though AI-generated writings are syntactically coherent, they usually contain formulaic wording, sudden topic shifts, or semantic or referential gaps that break the flow of the speech. This illustrates how difficult it is for AI to model inter-sentential coherence and pragmatic implicature.

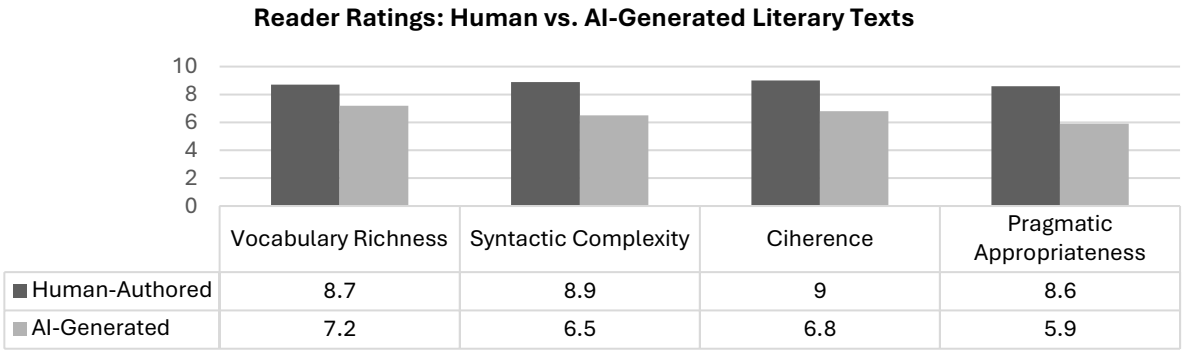

Figure 2: *Reader Ratings: Human vs. AI-Generated Literary Texts*

Pragmatic Appropriateness

When using language in human texts, one must consider register, politeness standards, emotional tone, and the desired conversational environment. For example, one may switch between more formal and colloquial modes as necessary. AI-generated outputs frequently lack pragmatic signals like attitude particles, emotional nuance, or hedging, maintaining a neutral, decontextualised posture. Even in situations where warmth, sarcasm, or personal stance are required, they employ relatively bland language.

CASE STUDY 1: POETIC DISCOURSE (LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS)

Human–Authored Poem: "Aubade with Burning City" (Ocean Vuong)

Selected for its marked use of syntactic fragmentation, enjambment, and cultural intertextuality, which serve as rich linguistic tokens for studying cognitive and discourse-level features.

Linguistic Features

- **Syntactic fragmentation & enjambment:** Vuong deliberately breaks lines and stanzas using enjambment and nonstandard punctuation. E.g., the line "In the square below: a nun, on fire," slows the reader and mirrors the emotional disjunction enacted by the Fall of Saigon. This breakage is a cognitive-linguistic cue, mapping onto disrupted narrative timelines and memory.
- **Lexical and pragmatic intertextuality:** The juxtaposition of clichés like "White Christmas" with war imagery creates a semantic rift that assumes reader familiarity with cultural scripts, revealing intricacies of pragmatic inference at work
- **Affective deixis:** Words such as "fire," "snow," and "silently" evoke strong affective dimensions. The adverb "silently," for example, functions linguistically as a pace delimiter and emotional intensifier—noted by critics as a "highest function" of language

AI-Generated Poem: "No Past, No Place"

Prompt: Write a free-verse poem on identity and conflict.

> "In shadows of silence, I find my name,
> Drawn in dust, whispered in flame.
> No past, no place, just shifting ground,
> Where silence speaks without a sound."
> (Source: ChatGPT)

Linguistic Features

- **Abstract, decontextualised lexicon:** Lexical choices such as "shadows," "dust," and "silence" are high-frequency, affectively neutral nouns lacking semantic specificity, characteristic of AI's tendency toward generic output.
- **Regular prosodic structure & rhyme:** The poem adheres to a consistent clause–line length and rhyme scheme (AABB), reflecting AI's replication of form without nuanced rhythm or semantic orchestration.
- **Discourse neutrality:** The poem operates without deixis or indexicals that point to

personal voice or culturally situated meaning. It remains a floating linguistic structure, devoid of grounding in time, place, or personal experience.

Feature	Vuong (Human)	AI (GPT-4)
Syntax	Fragmented, enjambed, varied	Uniform, linear clauses
Lexicon	Culturally specific, intertextual	Abstract, generic language
Pragmatic indexicals	Rich deixis (time, culture, affect)	Decontextualised, affect-neutral
Emotional intensity	Lexical and structural tension	Surface-level poetic devices

CASE STUDY 2: NARRATIVE DISCOURSE (LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS)

Human-Authored Story: "The Embassy of Cambodia" (Zadie Smith)

Selected for: its use of first-person plural narration, contextual deixis, and register shifts, making it an ideal case for analysing narrative voice and pragmatic grounding.

Linguistic Features

- **First-person plural (we):** The use of "we" functions as collective deixis—a rare grammatical form that creates discourse inclusivity and shared knowledge frameworks.
- **Contextual/Temporal deixis:** Phrases like "Many of us walked past her that afternoon…" more effectively anchor the narrative in space and time, enhancing discourse authenticity.
- **Pragmatic speech acts:** Direct speech ("I saw nine children washed up dead…") and reported speech produce genuine internal focalization, marked by emotional and pragmatic immediacy.

AI-Generated Story: "The Window across the Street"

"Elena lived on the 8th floor of a building that echoed with forgotten names and closed doors. Her only connection to the world outside was the window across the street, where every evening, a figure appeared behind a flickering lamp—sometimes reading, sometimes just staring back. She never learned the person's name, nor did they exchange words, but in the silent choreography of glances and presence, a fragile companionship formed. When the lamp stopped glowing one night and the window remained dark for weeks, Elena felt a profound emptiness settle in her chest, more vivid than any conversation she'd ever had." (Source: ChatGPT)

Linguistic Features

- **Third-person limited narration:** The text uses "Elena," "she," "her" denoting exophoric third-person references, which maintain discourse distance by avoiding internal subjectivity.
- **Metaphoric description with minimal deixis:** Lexical phrases like "forgotten names" and "closed doors" are metaphorical but lack anchoring deixis (e.g., time, location, speech acts), rendering them abstract and detached.
- **Absence of pragmatic markers:** The narrative does not use direct speech or discourse features that signal stance or cognition; hence, pragmatic neutrality dominates.

Feature	Smith (Human)	AI (GPT-4)
Narrative perspective	First-person plural ("we")	Third-person limited ("she," "her")
Spatial/temporal deixis	Contextual deixis present	Largely absent
Pragmatic stance	Direct/reported speech & stance markers	Lacks internal cognitive markers
Discursive authenticity	High, socio-culturally situated	Generic, emotionally flat

COMPARISON

Notwithstanding the noted drawbacks, there are a number of possible benefits of using AI in authorship. The potential for greater productivity and efficiency in the writing process is among the most important (Allado-McDowell, K., 2020). AI solutions have the potential to speed up the entire creative process by helping writers with a variety of tasks, such as research, planning, initial content drafting, editing, and formatting (Fyfe, P., 2023). Additionally, these technologies may produce vast amounts of text really quickly, which can be especially useful in some situations (Browne, S., 2022). This feature enables authors to automate some of the more tedious and repetitive parts of their work, freeing up their time and mental energy to concentrate on the more creative and complex aspects of writing, like

developing complex characters, creating intricate plotlines, and honing their distinct styles.

AI can also make it easier to explore new creative expressions that would not have been immediately evident using conventional writing techniques. Writers may be exposed to new narrative structures and stylistic approaches thanks to AI models' ability to produce text in a wide range of genres and styles (Graefe, A., & Bohlken, R., 2020). Additionally, the technology is well-suited for interactive storytelling, like in interactive fiction and game design, where AI may modify the plot based on player input to produce dynamic and customised experiences (Allado-McDowell, K., 2020). By engaging with AI, authors can access its extensive knowledge base and try out novel ideas and style combinations, which could result in the creation of genuinely unique and inventive creative masterpieces.

Lastly, writers who may encounter particular difficulties during the writing process can benefit from increased accessibility thanks to AI technologies (Herbold, S., et al., 2023). AI can be a source of inspiration for people who are having writer's block by assisting with brainstorming, producing preliminary ideas, and providing other wording to get past creative obstacles (Fyfe, P., 2023). Additionally, AI can be a useful writing aid for those who don't work as writers but yet need to create written content, assisting them in communicating more effectively and with higher quality (Tandoc Jr., E. C., et al., 2021). In these methods, artificial intelligence (AI) can help a greater number of people who want to express themselves via writing and decrease the entrance barrier for creative writing.

CONCLUSION

This study has shown that the linguistic richness of human-authored language, in both narrative and lyrical works, is still difficult for AI-generated texts to match. Deixis, intertextuality, pragmatic attitude, and syntactic diversity are important features that consistently set human discourse apart in both genres. For example, Zadie Smith's "The Embassy of Cambodia" uses contextual deixis and first-person plural deixis to place the story in a particular socio-cultural context, while Vuong's "Aubade with Burning City" uses fragmented syntax and cultural references to emphasise memory and emotion. On the other hand, the AI-generated story and poetry showed consistent structure, decontextualised vocabulary, and third-person narrative stasis, producing statements that were pragmatically flat but grammatically sound.

These results are consistent with linguistics' growing concerns regarding AI's ability to generate formally correct language without contextual force. Scholars like Bender et al. (2024) have also emphasised the lack of true comprehension in large language models (LLMs). Margaret Mitchell also cautions that "technology-centric" fluency is frequently given precedence over pragmatic emic understanding and social grounding in AI language systems. Despite recent research demonstrating that interacting AI agents can create emergent linguistic norms (e.g., Ashery et al., 2025), they are still unable to replicate the linguistic nuance and cultural embeddedness found in human conversation.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Several directions for future research are worth taking into account in order to deepen our understanding of the connection between authorship and artificial intelligence in literary writings. First and foremost, more advanced evaluation criteria that go beyond simple tests of coherence and grammatical accuracy are required to evaluate the stylistic and thematic quality of literature produced by AI.

Further investigation into the cooperation of humans and artificial intelligence in the production of literature is required (Allado-McDowell, K., 2020). Future research could look into the dynamics and possible synergies of collaborative writing rather than treating human and AI authorship as distinct entities. This would look at how each author's strengths and shortcomings can work together to create new kinds of literary expression.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Human-Authored Poem

Title: "Aubade with Burning City"
Author: Ocean Vuong
Excerpt (used under fair-use for academic comparison):

> "Milkflower petals on the black lacquered piano (don't look away)
> The song moving through the city like a widow.
> A white I'm your mother kiss me.
> A field of snow and something black moving under it."

Appendix 2: AI-Generated Poem

Title: "No Past, No Place"
Prompt: Write a free-verse poem on identity and conflict.

> "In shadows of silence, I find my name,
> Drawn in dust, whispered in flame.
> No past, no place, just shifting ground,
> Where silence speaks without a sound."

Appendix 3: Human-Authored Short Fiction

Title: "The Embassy of Cambodia"
Author: Zadie Smith
Excerpt (used under fair-use for academic comparison):

> "Fatou was one of the invisible people. She walked to her job at the health club in Willesden each day, past the gated embassies and glass-fronted houses… She kept the memory of that floating man inside her like a foreign coin."

Appendix 4: AI-Generated Short Fiction

Title: "The Window across the Street"
Prompt: Write a 500-word story about urban loneliness and silent companionship.

> "Elena lived on the 8th floor of a building that echoed with forgotten names and closed doors. Her only connection to the world outside was the window across the street, where every evening, a figure appeared behind a flickering lamp—sometimes reading, sometimes just staring back… When the lamp stopped glowing one night and the window remained dark for weeks, Elena felt a profound emptiness settle in her chest, more vivid than any conversation she'd ever had.