Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin Shelley and *Frankenstein*: A Chronology

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1797

August 30. Mary born to William and his wife, Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, who dies from postpartum hemorrhage September 10.

1801

December 21. William Godwin remarries a widow, Mary Jane Clairmont, who brings to the Godwin family her children Charles, aged seven, and Jane (later known as Claire), aged four.

1812

November 11. Mary's first meeting with Percy Bysshe Shelley. Mary resides with Baxter family in Dundee, 1812–14.

1814

May 5. Renewed contact in London with Percy Bysshe Shelley.

July 28. Percy Shelley elopes with Mary and Claire Clairmont from the Godwin household to France and Switzerland.

August 27. Two days after renting a house for six months at Brunnen, Lake of Lucerne, the Shelley ménage abruptly depart for England.

September 13. Return to London. Percy beleaguered by creditors and bailiffs.

November 30. Harriet, Percy's wife, gives birth to her second child, Charles.

1815

January. Erotic correspondence and involvement between Mary and T. J. Hogg.

February 22. Mary gives birth to premature female child, which dies March 6.

March 19. (Mary's Journal) "Dream that my little baby came to life again; that it had only been cold, and that we rubbed it before the fire, and it lived."

August. Mary and Percy, without Claire, settle at Bishopsgate, Windsor.

1816

January 24. A son William is born to Mary and Percy.

May 3. Percy and Mary, with Claire, leave for Switzerland, arriving ten days later at Geneva, where they meet up with Byron and Polidori.

June 15–16. Probable dates of discussion "of the principle of life," and of Byron's proposal for a story-telling competition, after which Mary, in a waking dream, sees "the pale student of unhallowed arts."

July 21–27. Shelley ménage visit Mont Blanc and the Mer de Glace at Montanvert.

July 24. (Mary's Journal) "Write my story." First journal reference to *Frankenstein*.

August 29–September 8. Shelley ménage return to England, where they settle at Bath September 10.

October 9. Fanny Imlay, Mary's half-sister, commits suicide.

December 5. (Mary's Letters) "Finished the 4 Chap of Frankenstein."

December 6–9. Mary reads Wollstonecraft's *Rights of Woman*.

December 10. Body of Harriet Shelley found drowned in Serpentine, Hyde Park.

December 30. Percy and Mary married, London.

1817

March 18. Shelleys, with Claire and her child Allegra by Byron, occupy their house at Marlow.

March 27. Lord Eldon in Court of Chancery denies Shelley custody of his two children by Harriet.

April 10–17. (Mary's Journal) "Correct 'Frankenstein.'"

April 18–May 13. Mary transcribes *Frankenstein*.

May 22–23. Shelleys to London to arrange for *Frankenstein*'s publication.

A Chronology

- June 18. John Murray, Byron's publisher, rejects *Frankenstein*.
August 3. Percy sends *Frankenstein* to his publisher Charles Ollier, who rejects it.
August 22. Percy contracts for publication of *Frankenstein* with Lackington, Allen, & Co.
September 2. The Shelleys' daughter Clara born.
September 23. Percy to London to correct proofs of *Frankenstein* and to arrange publication of *Revolt of Islam*.
October 22. (Mary's Journal) "Transcribe 'Frankenstein.'"
October 28. Percy sends Lackington from Marlow last corrections of proofs by post.
November 8–19. Mary joins Percy in London to oversee publication of *History of a Six Weeks' Tour*, while Percy handles *Revolt of Islam*.
December 3. Percy forwards dedication of *Frankenstein* from Marlow to Lackington & Co.

1818

- January. *Frankenstein* published anonymously (London: Printed for Lackington, Hughes, Harding, Mavor & Jones, Finsbury Square, 1818). Percy forwards presentation volumes to Sir Walter Scott
January 2.
January 15. (Letter from Percy to Charles Ollier) "Do you hear anything said of 'Frankenstein'?"
February 10. Shelleys leave Marlow for literary scene of London.
March 12. Shelleys leave England permanently for Italy.
September 24. Death in Venice of Clara Shelley.
December 20. (Mary's Journal) "Correct 'Frankenstein.'"

1819

- June 7. Death in Rome of William Shelley.
November 9. Date of revised manuscript of Mary's autobiographical novel *Mathilda*.
November 12. Birth of Mary's only child to survive, Percy Florence.

1822

- June 16. A miscarriage almost costs Mary her life.
July 8. Percy Bysshe Shelley drowned in Gulf of Spezia.

1823

July 28. Peake's melodrama, "Presumption; or, The Fate of Frankenstein" performed at English Opera House. This is followed by second edition of *Frankenstein* (London: printed for G. W. B. Whittaker, Ave Maria Lane, 1823), 2 vol.

August 25. Mary returns to England.

Publication of Mary's novel *Valperga*, followed by *The Last Man* (1826), *Perkin Warbeck* (1830), *Lodore* (1835), and *Falkner* (1837).

1831

October 15. Date of Mary's Introduction to third edition of *Frankenstein* (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1831), Standard Novels.

1836

April 7. Death of William Godwin.

1851

February 1. Mary Shelley dies.