Poetics peculiarity of mary shelley’s ‘tales and stories’

Mary Shelley has been remembered chiefly as the author of *Frankenstein* and the wife of Percy Bysshe Shelley. In his short introduction and notes, Charles E. Robinson provides a critical appreciation and elucidation of the tales. Most of Mary Shelley’s short narratives were first published in *The Keepsake*, the most enduring (1828 – 57) and popular of the nineteenth-century annual gift books. *The Keepsake* published the most celebrated writers of the age, among them Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, Scott, Dickens, Tennyson. The tales abound in highly dramatic situations. A bastard brother usurps the place of a nobleman, condemning the legitimate brother to the galleys. To avoid being shot, a girl changes clothes with her sister, a nun, and inherits with the nun’s habit a lifetime of seclusion behind convent walls. In order to dream about the future, a heroine dares to sleep on the St. Catherine’s couch, a narrow ledge of rock hanging precipitously over the raging winter torrent of the Loire. Levers wend their star-crossed way to blissful union or eternal despair. Brigands, pirates, smugglers, distressed damsels, darkly ambitious villains, and knights *sans peur et sans reproche* crowd thickly over the pages. Yet Mary Shelley’s intense and incandescent writing easily persuades the reader to a willing suspension of disbelief. Many of the tales have overtones of science fiction. A seventeenth-century Englishman, Mr. Dodsworth, buried in a glacier, is reanimated more than a century later to confront a vastly changed world. A man in whom the aging process has been suspended by alchemy encounters, is not an immortal bliss, but he has to suffer all the torments of living with a wife who ages into a querulous, jealous old woman while he remains young and handsome. Perhaps the most gripping account of transformation occurs when a rash young man trades bodies with a misshapen dwarf. His sense of horror as he perceives his new, grotesque shadow with its long spidery arms is chillingly conveyed. Springing from the cultural matrix of English Romanticism the tales reveal the new sensibility of the age – the overflowing emotion, the enthrallment with legend and romance.
Mary Shelley by Richard Rothwell © National Portrait Gallery, London. The most eloquent summary of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley’s position in English letters is still Leigh Hunt’s much-quoted couplet from “The Blue-Stocking Revels”: “And Shelley, fourfam’d, for her parents, her lord, / And the poor lone impossible monster abhorr’d.” Though recent studies have shown some appreciation of Mary Shelley by her own lights, the four “fames” Hunt mentioned have tended to outshine them. The story of the composition of Frankenstein is often told, though it is hardly ever told the same way twice. Though critics have called some of its details into question, the best account of the novel’s genesis is Mary’s own, in her preface to the 1831 edition. Mary Shelley’s ground-breaking novel Frankenstein was one of the first gothic explorations of artificial life, telling a terrible tale of doomed scientist Victor Frankenstein who gives life to a hulking, unnamed ‘Creature’. Here, Dr Sorcha NÃ­ Fhlainn considers Shelley’s inspirations for her creation and shares the legacy of the much-adapted work. Mary Shelley has been remembered chiefly as the author of Frankenstein and the wife of Percy Bysshe Shelley. In his short introduction and notes, Charles E. Robinson provides a critical appreciation and elucidation of the tales. Most of Mary Shelley’s short narratives were first published in The Keepsake, the most enduring (1828 – 57) and popular of the nineteenth-century annual gift books. The Keepsake published the most celebrated writers of the age, among them Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, Scott, Dickens, Tennyson. The tales abound in highly dramatic situations. A bastard brother Mary Shelley was an author of the Romantic era whose first novel is regarded a benchmark in English literature. This biography provides detailed information about her childhood, profile, career and timeline. Who was Mary Shelley? Mary Shelley was an English novelist renowned for her fictional writing and the ghastly themes she employed in her novels. She was born to Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin who were literarily and politically active. Her mother was a feminist and the author of A Vindication of the Rights of Woman. Mary was not fortunate enough to get enriched by her mother’s knowledge as she died soon after Mary’s birth. Mary Shelley was born Mary Godwin in London, England on August 30, 1797 to remarkable parents. Her mother, Mary Wollstonecraft, a feminist when feminism was almost unheard of, wrote A Vindication of the Rights of Women in 1792. Her father, William Godwin, a well-known critic of the British government and the founder of modern philosophical anarchism, wrote An Enquiry. Shelley’s novel Valperga was published in 1823. Set in 14th century Italy, it is the story of woman’s blind love for a man and her disillusionment as she gets to know him better. Valperga was written while Mary and Percy actually lived in Italy. While still in Italy, Mary Shelley experienced yet another tragedy.