

P.B.shelley

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Percy Bysshe Shelley

- **Born:**[August 4, 1792](#)
[Horsham, England](#)
- **Died:**[July 8, 1822](#)
[Livorno, Italy](#)
- **[Occupation:](#)**[Poet](#)



Introduction

- **Percy Bysshe Shelley** (August 4, 1792 – July 8, 1822; pronounced ['pɜːsi bɪʃ 'ʃɛli]) was one of the major English Romantic poets and is widely considered to be among the finest lyrical poets of the English language.
- He is perhaps most famous for such anthology pieces as Ozymandias, Ode to the West Wind, To a Skylark, and The Masque of Anarchy.
- However, his major works were long visionary poems including Alastor, Adonais, The Revolt of Islam, Prometheus Unbound and the unfinished The Triumph of Life.

Influence to others

- . Shelley's unconventional life and uncompromising idealism, combined with his strong skeptical voice, made him a notorious and much denigrated figure during his life.
- He became the idol of the next two or three generations of poets (including the major Victorian poets [Robert Browning](#), [Alfred Tennyson](#), [Dante Gabriel Rossetti](#), [Algernon Charles Swinburne](#), as well as [William Butler Yeats](#) and poets in other languages such as [Jibanananda Das](#) and [Subramanya Bharathy](#)).

Colleagues and Mary Shelley

- He was also admired by such persons as [Karl Marx](#) and [George Bernard Shaw](#).
- He is famous for his association with contemporaries [John Keats](#) and [Lord Byron](#); an untimely death at a young age was common to all three.
- He was married to the famous novelist [Mary Shelley](#), author of [Frankenstein](#), and wrote the introduction to the 1818 edition of the novel.

Early publications

- His first publication was a Gothic novel, Zastrozzi (1810), in which he gave vent to his atheistic worldview through the villain Zastrozzi.
- In the same year, Shelley, together with his sister Elizabeth, published *Original Poetry by Victor and Cazire*.

Early married life

- On July 28, 1814, Shelley abandoned his pregnant wife and child to elope with a 16-year-old for the second time. In fact, he managed to catch two 16-year-olds at this time: when he ran away with Mary, he also invited her step-sister Jane (later Claire) Clairmont along for company.
- The threesome sailed to Europe, crossed [France](#), and settled in [Switzerland](#). The Shelleys would later publish an account of this adventure. After six weeks, homesick and destitute, the three young people returned to England. There they found that William Godwin, the one-time champion and practitioner of [free love](#), refused to speak to Mary or Shelley.

His Work

- In the autumn of 1815, while living close to London with Mary and avoiding creditors, Shelley produced the verse allegory *Alastor, or The Spirit of Solitude*.
- It attracted little attention at the time, but it has now come to be recognized as his first major poem. At this point in his writing career, Shelley was deeply influenced by Wordsworth's poetry.

Introduction to Byron

- In the summer of [1816](#), Shelley and Mary made a second trip to [Switzerland](#). They were prompted to do so by Mary's stepsister [Claire Clairmont](#), who had commenced a liaison with [Lord Byron](#) the previous April just before his self-exile on the continent. Byron had lost interest in Claire, and she used the opportunity of meeting the Shelleys as bait to lure him to [Geneva](#).
- The Shelleys and Byron rented neighbouring houses on the shores of [Lake Geneva](#). Regular conversation with Byron had an invigorating effect on Shelley's poetry. While on a boating tour the two took together, Shelley was inspired to write his [Hymn to Intellectual Beauty](#), often considered his first significant production since *Alastor*. A tour of [Chamonix](#) in the French [Alps](#) inspired [Mont Blanc](#), a difficult poem in which Shelley pondered questions of historical inevitability and the relationship between the human [mind](#) and external [nature](#).

Introduction to Byron II

- Shelley, in turn, influenced Byron's poetry. This new influence showed itself in the third part of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, which Byron was working on, as well as in *Manfred*, which he wrote in the autumn of 1816. At the same time, Mary was inspired to begin writing *Frankenstein*. At the end of summer, the Shelleys and Claire returned to England. Claire was pregnant with Byron's daughter, *Allegra Byron*, a fact that would have an enormous impact on Shelley's future.

Family Tragedies

- The return to England was marred with tragedy. Fanny Imlay, Mary Godwin's half-sister and a member of Godwin's household, killed herself in late autumn.
- In December 1816, Shelley's estranged wife Harriet drowned herself in the Serpentine in [Hyde Park, London](#). On [December 30, 1816](#), a few weeks after Harriet's body was recovered, Shelley and Mary Godwin were married.
- The marriage was intended, in part, to help secure Shelley's custody of his children by Harriet, but it was in vain: the children were handed over to foster parents by the courts.

More of his work

- The Shelleys took up residence in the village of [Marlow](#), [Buckinghamshire](#) where a friend of Percy's, [Thomas Love Peacock](#), lived. Shelley took part in the literary circle that surrounded [Leigh Hunt](#), and during this period, he met [John Keats](#).
- Shelley's major production during this time was *Laon and Cythna*, a long, narrative poem in which he attacked religion and featured a pair of incestuous lovers. It was hastily withdrawn after only a few copies were published.
- It was later edited and reissued as [The Revolt of Islam](#) in 1818. Shelley also wrote two revolutionary political tracts under the [nom de plume](#) of "The Hermit of Marlowe."

Work and more Tragedies

- Early in 1818, the Shelleys and Claire left England in order to take Claire's daughter, Allegra, to her father Byron, who had taken up residence in [Venice](#). Contact with the older and more established poet encouraged Shelley to write once again.
- During the latter part of the year, he wrote *Julian and Maddalo*, a lightly disguised rendering of his boat trips and conversations with Byron in Venice, finishing with a visit to a madhouse. This poem marked the appearance of Shelley's "urbane style". He then began the long verse drama [Prometheus Unbound](#), which features talking mountains and a petulant demon who overthrows [Zeus](#).
- Tragedy struck in 1818 and 1819, when his son Will died of fever in [Rome](#), and his infant daughter Clara Everina died during yet another household move.

More of His Work II

- The Shelleys moved around various Italian cities during these years. Shelley completed *Prometheus Unbound* in Rome, and he spent the summer of 1819 writing a tragedy, *The Cenci*, in [Livorno](#).
- In this year, prompted among other causes by the [Peterloo massacre](#), he wrote his best-known political poems: *The Masque of Anarchy* and *Men of England*. These were most likely his most-remembered works during the 19th century. Around this time period, he wrote the essay *The Philosophical View of Reform*, which was his most thorough exposition of his political views to that date.
- In 1821, inspired by the death of [John Keats](#), Shelley wrote the elegy [Adonais](#).

Drowning

- On [July 8, 1822](#), less than a month before his 30th birthday, Shelley drowned in a sudden storm while sailing back from [Livorno](#) to [Lerici](#) in his schooner, [Don Juan](#).
- Many believe his death was not accidental. Some say that Shelley was depressed in those days and that he wanted to kill himself, others that he did not know how to navigate, others believe that some pirates mistook the boat for Byron's and attacked him, and others have even more fantastical stories. There is a mass of evidence, though scattered and contradictory, that Shelley may have been murdered for political reasons.