

# Heart of Hearts

*by* Christian Bell

In the year without a summer, Mary Godwin sat by the window, rain soaking her world. No playing in the opaque lake, no soaking in the invisible sun. When she was with the group, they talked ghost stories, bringing corpses to life, using electricity to animate dead tissue. Byron the beautiful lover suggested, let's each write a tale. Percy, her lover, still married to Harriet, said, let's create, as he does with his women. In dark fog she thought of her dead baby from several years ago. Can you reanimate dead flesh? In half-dreams she saw a pale alchemist kneeling before a stitched together abomination, witchcraft and science merged, mocking God's fire. You will pay the price, fire-stealer, a bird will have liver for dinner every night. In other dreams she saw that Percy and son William and yet to be born children would die, as she lived on, holding onto locks of hair, the heart of hearts pulled from fire. She penned words as shadows ruled the world, as dead babies haunted her mind's eyes. Percy would enter her room, wanting, you know, but not now, she said, these are the days when I become a person, as monster and maker chased each other to the earth's end, hearts filled with horror.

