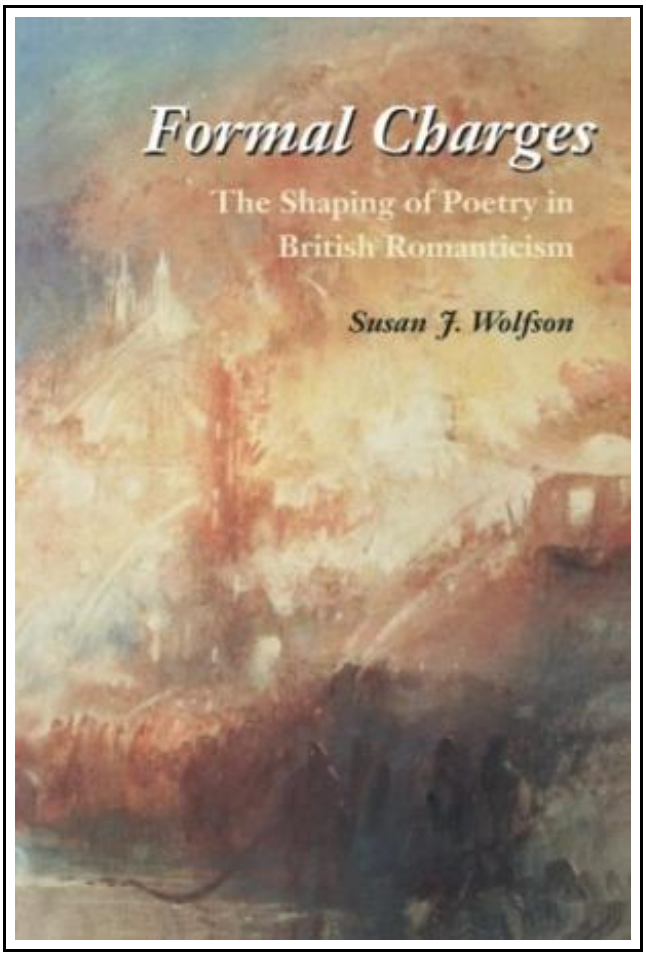
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Stanford University Press. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Formal Charges: Shaping of Poetry in British Romanticism, Susan J. Wolfson, Why care about poetic form and its intricacies, other than in nostalgia for a bygone era of criticism? The purpose of this book is to refresh today this care for criticism, applying a historically aware formalist reading to poetic form in Romanticism and showing how in theory and practice Romantic writers addressed, debated, tested, and contested fundamental questions about what is at stake in the poetic forming of language. In the process, it suggests the importance of these conflicted inquiries for contemporary critical discussion and demonstrates the pleasures of attending to the complex changes of form in poetic writing. After an introductory chapter on the controversies about poetic form and formalism from the Romantic era to our own, succeeding chapters consider particular instances in Romantic poetry in which experimental agendas or unsettled traditions promote an awareness of new textual possibilities. The author shows how Blake's Poetical Sketches predicts many of the key issues of Romantic theory and practice, and how Coleridge's ambivalent engagement with simile impels him to address the very foundations of poetic form. A chapter on Wordsworth's revision of an episode in The Prelude demonstrates how a repeated reworking of form virtually characterizes the work of autobiography, and the dilemma of self-formation is also the focus of a chapter on Byron's seemingly perverse choice of the heroic couplet in The Corsair. Keats, too, is shown to wrestle with the issue of self and form at the end of his career in his personal lyrics to Fanny Browne, which subverted the formalism of the "Great Odes" of 1819, the celebrated icons of New Criticism. A final chapter describes Shelley's investment of poetic performance with social agency in two seemingly...

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