

Short Story: Drowned [C1]

Un viaggio misterioso attraverso una valle gallese, che svela una storia nascosta nel tempo e gli inquietanti segreti intrappolati sotto la superficie dell'acqua.

So, what's this recording you're making for? A podcast? Ah, an art project, is it? For the Liverpool School of Art and Design! Well, that's lovely. I've only been to Liverpool once, when I was a girl. 'The Sounds of Nature'?! Interesting. Well, there'll be plenty of those, I can promise you that. Your equipment looks expensive. You'd better put it right in the centre of the boat at the bottom so I don't **splash** it with the **oars**. No, no, don't worry. This little boat is completely **watertight**! "Yes, we have a lot of birds, especially **birds of prey: hen harriers, kestrels** and **red kites**. The kites are my favourites; they were nearly extinct a few years ago. Now they're coming back. They can, you see, when men leave them alone. Yes, they hunt on the land, not on the water, but **I'm rowing** to the centre of the **reservoir** because they're something else I'd like you to hear. You won't be disappointed. I'm a bit of an expert, but I think they told you that down the pub, didn't they, when they told you to speak to me about local knowledge? Yes, I thought as much. "You see, I lived here when I was a child. No, no, I don't mean in Snowdonia National Park, I mean right here, just about under where the boat is now. You look surprised. There's not much left of the house now, of course. There's not much left of anything. I'd put the headphones on now, if I were you, and hold the microphone close to the surface of the water. "You start. You've heard something, I see. Children laughing in a **playground**? People chatting outside the village store? Ah, singing. Oh yes, you'll hear a lot of that. It's no use looking towards the hills, it's not coming from there. And no, it's not coming from a church. It's coming from the **chapel**. That's what we call it in Wales. You'd always hear a lot of Welsh voices singing beautifully in the **chapel** of a Sunday morning. Of course I know it's Tuesday, but the voices are **still** singing, see, or laughing, or chatting. You keep listening, they want to be heard. "You're looking a bit **pale**. The boat's not bothering you, is it? The water's **still** today, there's not a **breath of wind** — better for hearing the other sounds. What's that? No, there's no children

round here, love, not today. At least I can't see any. Can you? Camp site's closed at this time of year, so there's only [the odd hiker](#). You really are looking very [pale](#). I'd take you back, but I think you should listen a bit more. What's that they're saying, love? Their [times tables](#)? Oh yes, we're right over the school. I went to that school. So did my little brother, Owen. He's down there [still](#) of course. I'm sure I hear him sometimes. "Crying is it, now? Then we must be over the [graveyard](#). When the government decided [to flood](#) the valley and the village to make the [reservoir](#), they asked us if we wanted [to disinter](#) our loved ones and have them moved to [higher ground](#). Not many did. Most of us couldn't [bear](#) the thought of disturbing them. My mother wouldn't hear of [digging up](#) our Owen and seeing that tiny [coffin](#) again. He was only seven when he died. Bronchitis it was, he never was very strong. They say scuba divers go down and film the [gravestones](#) — they're some of the only stones [still](#) standing. You can see the videos on YouTube, my granddaughter says, but I've never looked. I wouldn't want to. Think of all those people looking at our Owen's grave on a screen, when I can't even go and [lay](#) a few flowers. "Now you look shocked. You've heard it, have you? The protest march? All those voices shouting 'Do not drown our homes!' and '[Hands off](#) Tryweryn Valley!' It didn't do any good of course, even though we marched all the way to Liverpool. The government had already decided: Liverpool needed more water for industry, so our beautiful valley and our beautiful village, our community, had to go. They [passed an act](#) of Parliament and that was that. We were never even consulted. "Are the voices getting louder? And louder?! Yes, they do that. They're [still](#) angry, see! No! Don't [snatch off](#) the headphones like that, you make the boat [rock](#)! You'll have us both in the water. We don't want to go down to them, do we? To their watery graves. "Yes, I can see you've had enough. I'll take you to the river corridor. We get a lot of aquatic birds there, [herons](#) and stuff. More what you were expecting, I suppose. I'm sorry if I frightened you, but you see, they [still](#) want to be heard, those voices. They're [still](#) protesting, though there's nobody to hear." **Tryweryn Valley** In 1965, the Tryweryn Valley on the edge of the Snowdonia National Park in Wales was flooded to create a [reservoir](#), Llyn Celyn, that would provide water for industry in Liverpool and the Wirral. As a result, the rural community of Capel Celyn, one of the last Welsh-only speaking communities in Wales, was completely submerged. All its buildings,

including the post office, the school, and a [chapel](#) with a cemetery, were lost. The members of the community had [waged an eight-year battle](#) to prevent the destruction of their homes, but their voices went unheard.

Glossary

- **splash** = schizzare
- **breath of wind** = soffio di vento
- **coffin** = bara
- **watertight** = a tenuta d'acqua
- **the odd hiker** = l'escursionista occasionale
- **times tables** = tabelline
- **to disinter** = esumare
- **I'm rowing** = remare
- **gravestones** = lapide
- **passed an act** = approvare una legge
- **snatch off** = strappare
- **rock** = far oscillare
- **digging up** = disseppellire
- **herons** = aironi
- **still** = calma, ferma
- **bear** = sopportare
- **Hands off** = giù le mani
- **to flood** = allagare
- **higher ground** = terreno più alto
- **waged an eight-year battle** = intraprendere una battaglia
- **birds of prey** = rapaci
- **kestrels** = gheppi
- **reservoir** = bacino
- **pale** = pallido
- **graveyard** = cimitero
- **oars** = remi
- **hen harriers** = albanelle reali
- **red kites** = nibbi rossi
- **chapel** = cappella
- **lay** = posare