

Garth Hill

You've probably seen it from the motorway.

For Wales, it's a mother hill rising above the cities like a medieval shrine. A holy face interrupted with tumuli

and skylark.

But, for you, it may be that silhouette brooding behind Hollywood's *Englishman who Went up a Hill but Came down a Mountain*.

I returned to the Garth double jabbed with an air-pod perched in my ear. The yellow bracken brushed my boots while powder filled my prints dry. Steep bits had steps like scallops, created by tip-toeing pilgrims treading carefully on a movie set.

Shuffle meant that tracks were unexpected: hidden threads in an emerging tapestry. Delius. Killers. Eddie Izzard narrating Ivor the Engine. Messiah. Muse. And then...

a long forgotten

voice.

A silver depth returned, marinated for thirty years in a Welsh pulpit. The *unheimlich* of his latter days had spread over my mind like cumulus. A dust cloth of coughs over my grandfather preacher.

As I approached the ridge with the ravens, his random history talk, recorded in a 1985 tin tabernacle, had not only metamorphosed into an MP3 but began fusing with the landscape around me.

His cracked hands were the grasping trees; his wispy hair stroked the hillside like long grass; and his slumbering body mirrored the contours on the horizon.

I see that this is a land filled with sleeping warriors or insomniacs, depending on your point of view. His presence transubstantiated the secularised day into a sacred feast.