

Today, thanks to the BBC, we can still hear Virginia Woolf's voice ... even though she died in 1941.

In this audio clip, recorded four years after the author published *Mrs. Dalloway*, she gives her eulogy to words. She would have been about 55 years old at the time.

The recording, which Virginia made, was part of a BBC radio broadcast from the 29th of April, 1937. The talk was called "Craftsmanship" and was part of a BBC series entitled "Words Fail Me." Among other things, she discusses:

- The process of writing;
- The difficulties of finding words for new experiences;
- The question of where the meaning of words reside.

The text, of Virginia's BBC talk, was later posthumously published as an essay in *The Death of the Moth and Other Essays* (1942).

Words did not fail her when Virginia put them to use in her novels. She sometimes employed a technique called "stream of consciousness" in her stories.

*Mrs. Dalloway* is an example of this writing device, where we enter the mind of the characters to experience what they are thinking. The British Library tells us [more about it](#):

*It's a style of writing evolved by authors at the beginning of the 20th century to express in words the flow of a character's thoughts and feelings. The technique aims to give readers the impression of being inside the mind of the character - an internal view that illuminates plot and motivation in the novel. Thoughts spoken aloud are not always the same as those "on the floor of the mind," as Woolf put it.*

*'Stream of consciousness' has its origins in the late 19th century with the birth of psychology. An American psychologist, William James (brother of novelist Henry), first used the phrase in his *Principles of Psychology* of 1890 to describe the flow of conscious experience in the brain.*

*The term was first used in a literary sense by May Sinclair in her 1918 review of a novel by Dorothy Richardson. Other authors well known for this style include Katherine Mansfield, William Faulkner and, most notably, James Joyce.*

Virginia Woolf also had a special way of describing how we find peace in our lives:

*You cannot find peace by avoiding life.*

That statement takes-on a poignant meaning when we think about the manner of [Virginia's death](#).

The British Library has released a [three-CD set](#) containing the voices of other famous writers, including this clip of Virginia Woolf. It is called "The Spoken Word: British Writers and American Writers."

Credits:

Clip online, via BBC.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at](#):

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Virginia-Woolf-Only-Surviving-Recording-of-Her-Voice>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at](#):

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Virginia-Woolf-Only-Surviving-Recording-of-Her-Voice>