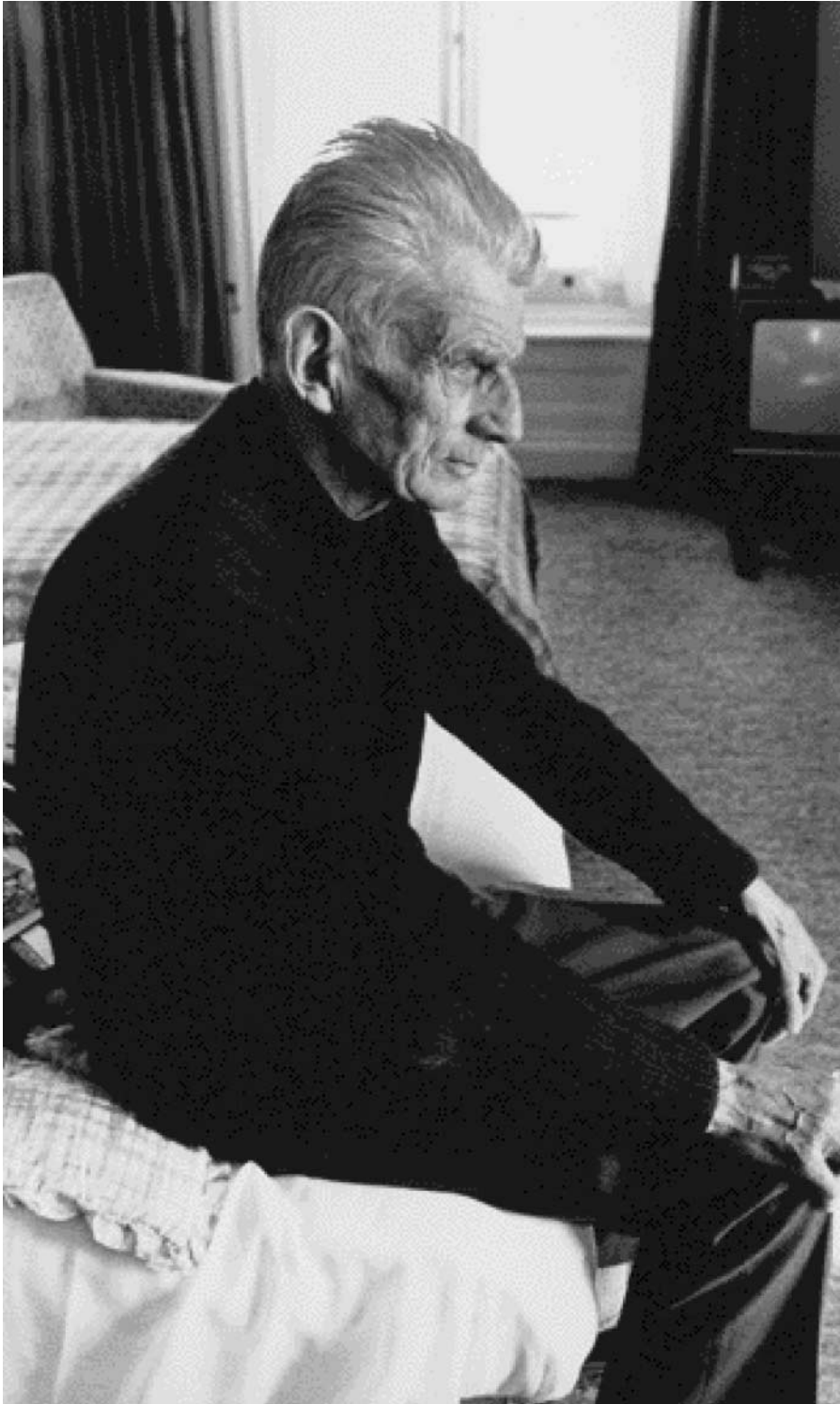


Psychiatry in pictures

EDITED BY ALLAN BEVERIDGE

Do you have an image, preferably accompanied by 100 to 200 words of explanatory text, that you think would be suitable for Psychiatry in Pictures? Submissions are very welcome and should be sent direct to Dr Allan Beveridge, Queen Margaret Hospital, Whitefield Road, Dunfermline, Fife KY12 0SU, UK.



Samuel Beckett (1906–1989) photographed by John Minihan (b. 1946). Text by John Wallace, Clinical Psychiatrist/Consultant Psychiatrist, Kilrush Day Hospital, County Clare, Ireland.

Samuel Beckett, the most emphatic modernist writer to emerge in the 20th century, was born on 13 April 1906. Initially, Beckett did what his family expected of him and worked as a lecturer in French but in 1934 he was diagnosed with recurrent depression and referred to Dr Wilfred Bion at the Tavistock Clinic in London. He attended Bion for psychotherapy three times a week over 2 years. When his therapy ended he 'slipped away' to Paris where he remained for the next 50 years.

During the war years he worked with the Resistance and was subsequently awarded the Croix de Guerre by General de Gaulle. After the war Beckett served in Normandy with the Red Cross, an experience that gave him a vision of 'humanity in ruins'. Before this he was not a consistently dedicated artist but his experience of human suffering with the Red Cross informed the content of his subsequent writing.

In contrast to the more familiar images of Beckett, this photograph reveals an intimate and enduring portrait of the 1969 Noble Prize winner, the unrepentant avant-garde artist, the last modernist.