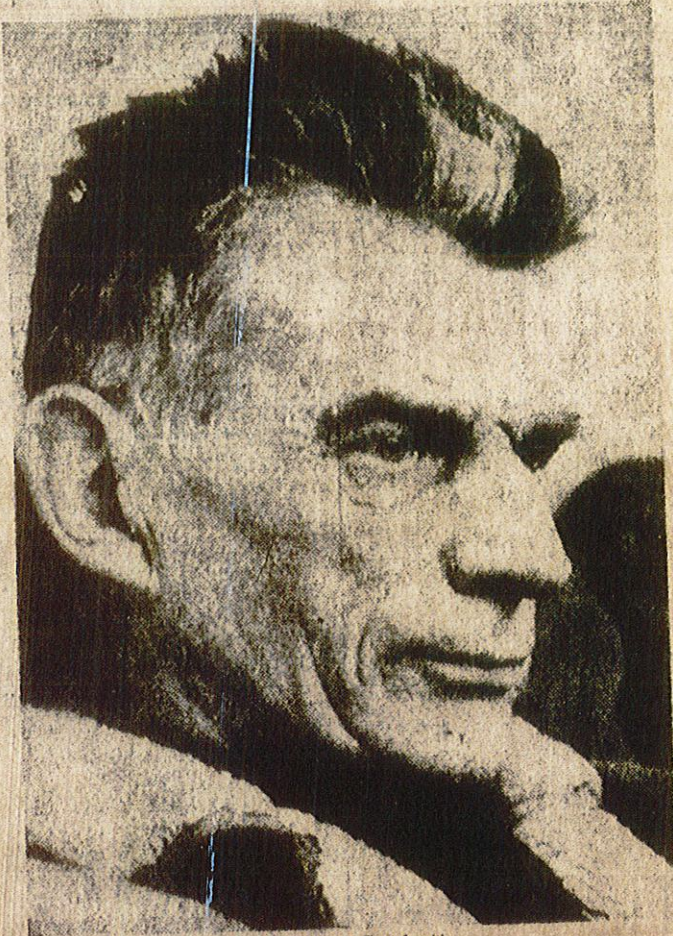


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Samuel Beckett

Beckett isolated in Tunisia

Samuel Beckett, who was yesterday awarded the Nobel Prize for literature, is on holiday in a floodbound Tunisian fishing village.

"He has gone out on an excursion today, and will not be back until tonight," said the clerk of his hotel.

The village is one of many isolated by three weeks of rain and floods, reportedly the worst in a thousand years in the area.

It is not too certain that the writer himself, celebrated for his rigorous safeguarding of private life, is too happy about the sudden world-wide notoriety the prize will bring. Beckett's French publisher, Jerome Lindon, said last night that while he personally was

happy at this recognition, which would contribute towards making Beckett's work better known, it was something which Beckett did not wish for.

M. Lindon said that it was contrary to Beckett's modest character to accept this prize. "I cannot imagine him going to Stockholm and making a speech. It is the kind of thing he has never done in his life."

However, some of his friends feel that since refusing the prize would cause more excitement than accepting it, Beckett may accept the honour but plead his recent ill-health as a reason for not appearing in Stockholm.

Le Monde described the honour as "coming rather late" for a writer of Beckett's

stature. However, there is good reason to believe that some years ago, when Beckett was a top favourite for the prize, he made it known in advance that he would refuse it. That year it was awarded to Jean-Paul Sartre, who did refuse it.

The Paris newspapers point out that it was during his life in France, particularly since "Molloy" in 1951, and "Waiting for Godot" (1953), that his most important part of his work was written. They quote the French critic, Pierre de Boisdeffre, who described Beckett as "this foreigner who came carrying fire into the too prudent edifice of our language."

(Editorial comment on page 12)
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