NINETTE

ni née
ni nette

ni n’-ette:
a diminutive
non-entity
In Moran’s deliberately mendacious account of his fictitious pilgrimage to the Turdy Madonna (reprising incidentally the leitmotif of anal birth) we are informed that his infant son succumbed whilst his wife, Ninette, survived the ordeal of parturition. As we know – or at least surmise – the opposite it true, for Jacques junior lives and Ninette has gone before. Ninette’s naming simultaneously brings her into being and obliterates her, as if the naming itself were a form of, or an index of death. Deconstructing the name’s material components reveals that Ninette is neither properly born (ni née) nor clearly defined (ni nette). This neither/nor-ness is further compounded, further diminished, by the diminutive suffix – ette, making of Moran’s late wife another Beckettian quintessence of nothingness. The root of the name, it should be noted, is from Ann and ultimately from the Hebrew Hannah – the name of the biblical Samuel’s mother. The absent presence of Ninette therefore constitutes, in Beckett’s personal mythology, another annihilation of the mother figure and makes a veiled allusion to his own wish for unbirth.