



BRENDAN O'CONNOR

NOT TO MENTION

Our grandparents got channels
peculiar to the Hoek Farm
region, private broadcasts
emanating from between rows
of broom corn.

 Their house at the edge
of the forest, the annex with its lintel
you had to stoop to pass under
we called “the guest bedroom”

And what persists in white noise,
dry crackle of husks, the hired
man bludgeoned for the money
in his shoes?

 Gaps, static,
the unsaid that makes a life
possible, precludes *a slip*
into the monstrous.

 For me. I could
have been your pocket Shackleton,
but thank you for permission
to go on, “*the* might-have-been”
for the only one tap-tapping
requests to the corn, on pirate
frequencies.

 Cleave to the lessons
of starvation, said Grandmother.
So fortunate. Not to have been
those mismatched hemispheres.