A new journal began publication two years ago, called Scientific Study of Literature. It has continued to publish successfully twice a year, and for the most part, as one would guess from its title, contains reports of empirical studies of literary reading. Can there be such a thing? Or does an empirical approach destroy what is literary about literature? Is science, with its commitment to reason and mathematics and the empirical, incapable of seeing literariness? Many have thought so. Keats, for example, complained that it would “Conquer all mysteries by rule and line,” that science will “unweave a rainbow.” Hazlitt thought that the progress of knowledge tended to “to clip the wings of poetry.” And these comments echo others made during the Romantic period and since. Does science destroy what the artist has created? I will suggest not. In this presentation I will analyse what the problem might mean, and argue that if the right framework for analysis is adopted, a scientific approach to literature has much to teach us, and much that can illuminate other areas, such as cognitive science and our educational practices. It may help rescue literature from the theoretical quandary in which it has been left with the collapse of postmodernist theory.