

AN INTERESTING SIGNAL/A VERY DULL MOVIE

(for Jane, Jim and Tom)

The Nazi tattoo on the inner forearm of the waitress in the drugstore expands and contracts to the play of muscle beneath the skin as its decisive movements prepare my breakfast. Handing me my eggs, she smiles. I smile back at her.

In my youth I often observed with alert attention the slow, pulsing flight of jellyfish in the salt-green lagoon cupped by the low sand hills of my beloved Gulf Coast. Their mindless grace.

The lady novelist would have liked us to embarrass her by saying that she was a *good* lady novelist. We did not commit that breach of taste. Art is not compassionate.

Implicit also in that primordial, potential pool were the trilobites like unstrung lyres, barracuda like swift steel triggers, and the amoeba which will swallow us.

I notice that my spirits are flagging. Metaphor establishes connections between unlike objects. If you would like help, you must put your distress call in code.

In Milford I chart the progress of my disease: backache, headache, hot flashes, fever, insomnia. It amuses me to have written a love story.