

Archive

By Olivia Williams

Cryogenic pages inscribed with
text of molecules, the slurred slush words
a record of ancient winters—
each leaf a year of snowfall, sintering
into homogeneity, someday
a solid mass of ice.
Together, these archives
comprise a library for our reading;
translators' borrowed tools in blue-gloved hands
revealing our planet's history,
frostbite like paper cuts on fingertips.
Sea spray and scattered dust, pressed between
the leaves like blossoms from another spring,
unveiled as we read—children eager
to learn the secrets of the final page.