

## “The Vostok Ice Core Gives a Creative Writing Lesson”

by Nancy Campbell



1. Be complete. Tell the whole story: every day in every season, summer and winter, from the present until the beginning of time.
2. Be discreet. Record events in one location only; preserve the unities of space, if not of time.
3. Be precise. Do not get distracted by your own fears, the imminence of extinction. Never decide your results in advance.
4. Be concise. Do not use too many words. Do use a language that everyone can understand.
5. Air is invisible, but it holds just as much information as ice.
6. By the time they reach your readers, the events you describe will seem infinitesimal. That faint grey line left by a volcanic eruption that grounded all the world's planes? It's nothing to them.
7. Remember that ice is the frozen state of water. Your document may take on other forms.
8. If you want to find ice, go to the cold places, but keep your own temperature constant.
9. The work will not be quick. Anticipate seven seasons.
10. Keep going deeper. The story is already there: extraction is the reader's art. Reading in the cold, drilling through the dark.