

“It will not at first greatly matter how skilfully the bodies are preserved, so long as *hope* is preserved.”

– Robert Ettinger, cryonics enthusiast

Benjamin Franklin thought that if he could be preserved in a cask of good Madeira wine, he would have liked very much to see what the world was like in a century or two.

He wondered whether the people of the future would cherish the same hard-won victories that he fought for, and whether they would still prize the values of his era.

Would liberty and equality seem old-fashioned?

– Adapted from Benjamin Franklin’s letter to Jacques Dubourg, April 1773

What if death itself were just another disease – generally fatal, but not necessarily incurable?

– From ‘You’re as Cold as Ice’, *This American Life* podcast

Patricia has survived for several generations in a freezer.

Her life consists of periodic thawings for medical checkups, birthdays and special occasions, such as important planetary expeditions, famous crimes and trials, and weddings of royalty or film stars – in short, everything that deserves to be seen and handed down to the distant future.

Patricia's life is concentrated, containing only the essential: nothing that does not deserve to be lived.

Yet, for all her presumed good fortune, Patricia is not happy. “Freeze and defrost, and freeze and defrost becomes wearying in the long run,” she complains.

– Adapted from Primo Levi’s short story ‘Sleeping Beauty in the Fridge’, *The Sixth Day*.

This is the curious specimen *Turritopsis Dohrnii*, otherwise known as the Immortal Jellyfish.

*Turritopsis Dohrnii* can revert back to earlier stages in its life in times of stress. This unique ability makes it biologically immortal.

Imagine if human beings had this kind of convenience. I would go back to playing my Super Nintendo whenever I want to escape the pressures of adulthood.

Although the Immortal Jellyfish is "biologically immortal", it has natural predators that it can fall victim to. Modern people do not have any natural predators... except perhaps each other.

When animals like this exist sometimes you cannot help but think that human beings are just so unremarkable.

It is tempting to wish that one could have immortality too.

Human beings might achieve immortality soon. That can be good news for that person – but would that individual be comfortable to entrust the rest of humanity with the same privilege?

The wisest choice might be to resign to one's mortality.

For now immortality will remain with the Immortal Jellyfish.

– Text from Veronica Tolentino's *The Immortal Jellyfish: A foldout zine of conscientious thoughts*

Eventually, we lose everyone. Unless we save them: in the freezer, in an archive, in our children, or forever in our hearts.

– Adapted from Jill Lepore's article 'The Ice Man', *New Yorker*