**THE WHAT IF**

1. **THAT FIRST PINPRICK**: In no more than a page, write about the instant the idea that you’re working with—the one that won’t seem to leave you alone—first grabbed you. Try to zero in on the very first glimmer.
2. **WHY DO YOU CARE?** In no more than a page, write down why you care about the story that you want to tell. There is no right answer; whatever comes to mind is relevant, even if it seems silly. You might surprise yourself and discover you care for an entirely different reason than you thought you did.
3. **WHAT IS YOUR POINT?** See if you can nail the point your story will make in a few concise lines. Don’t worry if in the beginning it splashes all over the page. Just keep focusing in on the driving point it will make. The goal is to reduce it to its essence.
4. **DRAFTING YOUR *WHAT IF*:** Write a *What If* that’s as fully fleshed out as you can make it, but still concise. You don’t want this What If to sprawl all over the place. Don’t be afraid if the first attempt is wide of the mark. Keep at it until you have something specific, with context, conflict and a hint of surprise: something that will make your point.