

HUNTING AND GATHERING

reporting for story, character, meaning
tom french

The divide is not between the servants and the served, between the leisured and the workers, but between those who are interested in the world and its multiplicity of forms and forces, and those who merely subsist, worrying or yawning. . . . The world is full of light and life, and the true crime is not to be interested in it.

-- from *Elementals: Stories of Fire and Ice*,
by A.S. Byatt

Notes On Getting It Down In Your Notebook

- invent nothing -- not even so much as a blade of grass
- slip into their skin
- get the dog's name
- practice invisibility
- slow down
- don't be afraid to get a little dirty
- get your subjects talking, whispering, shouting to each other
- report for the senses
- pay attention to everything
- not just the details, but the meaning beneath the details
- think cinematically
- watch for big revealed inside little