

and slows my sometimes frantic train of thought to a more fluent pace.

Of course as we are becoming acquainted with one another I find myself wondering about her past. Whose hands caressed her for all of these years? Did she travel with them to exotic places, or was she content on the desk of a farm house in Topeka? From the looks of the luggage ~~that~~ arrived with her she's been around a bit, but she's in good enough shape to suggest that someone really loved her and knew how to treat her right. I think it will be fun to muse on where she's been before, and I'm hoping some of her tales become known to me as we go along making stories of our own.

Like I said, she's pretty simple stock in some ways. She does not yelp at me when I've made a mistake or misspelled a word. She does not glibly lead me to believe that she knows more than I do and that she has corrected all of my shortcomings. She leaves the work for me. I have to rely on my own good sense, with my Webster's and Chicago Manual of Style nearby, of course. She does not put on appearances, or let me dress up my words with fancy formatting, fonts or millions of colours. Straight up 10 pitch Pica, baby, with a choice between black or a daring red ink. Just words on the page, the way it should be.

Another thing I just adore about her? The gentle rhythm she mutters for each letter of every word. And when I'm done with a line she reminds me with a sweet, melodious chime. She really helps me feel every word, with that slower and more thoughtful pace that allows me space to breathe and (hopefully) think more clearly. She's kind of got that Zen thing going on. I appreciate that.

Why did I name her Constance? Well, it has something to do with my favourite book of poems by Jane Kenyon, but it also means that I know she will be my long time and constant companion as I struggle to get my words down on paper. She may not be as readily available to me at any time or any place, or as effortless when it comes to rearranging my sentences as my high-tech and lately unreliable friend the laptop. And I may not have the virtual world of bountiful information at my fingertips when she and ^I spend time