

In homage to Jeff Foxworthy, I've come up with a writer's version of his classic "You might be a redneck if. . ." And yes, all of the following apply to me. Scary, huh?

You might be a writer if. . .

You sleep with pen and paper next to your bed—and the stove and the couch and the dining table and the shower and the toilet and the. . .

You have a favorite punctuation mark. My editor's trying to wean me off of em dashes—good luck with that. However, I've recently discovered the joys of the semi-colon.

You've been known to argue with someone on the usage difference between en and em dashes. Don't even get me started.

You're completely and utterly addicted to fountain pens. You have more bottles/colors of ink than you have pens, and use this as an excuse to buy more pens.

You get caught up in plotting your next scene and put the cereal in the fridge and the milk in the pantry.

The salespeople at the local Staples know you.

While in Staples, you should never be left unchaperoned in the briefcase aisle. (One briefcase is *never* enough.)

The stacks of your old manuscripts and rejection letters officially constitutes a fire hazard.

You desperately want Crayola tub markers so you can write down the great dialog that comes to you in the shower.

All you want for Christmas are fountain pens, ink, and journals.

Most people who hear voices take medication. You get paid to write down what the voices say.

You love restaurants that put a big sheet of paper over the table cloth and leave you with a handful of crayons.

If you didn't have a book contract, you'd be writing anyway.

You just know you're on an FBI list of people to watch because of the books you've ordered: poisons, how to dispose of a body, government conspiracies, secret societies, planning the perfect crime, espionage secrets . . .

Your surgeon orders your glasses taken away before you've finished memorizing the operating room for a scene in your next book. BTW—operating rooms are uber-cool, then really blurry.

When you're not writing, you get this persistent twitch in your left eyelid.

You proofread your Tweets and text messages before sending.

You take more writing paraphernalia on vacation than clothes—and don't mind if it rains.

You're talking to a real, living, breathing person and suddenly stop and listen because one of your characters interrupted you.

You think sleep is way overrated. Who needs more than three hours anyway?

Your novels are backed up on your laptop, your netbook, your husband's computer, two thumb drives, and you're seriously toying with the idea of getting a safe deposit box.

You don't mind extra long waits at the doctor's office because it gives you more time to write.

And finally, you know you're a writer if you look at yourself and see a writer. Everyone else looks at you and sees an obsessive-compulsive, anal-retentive insomniac with a pen fetish.