

# Leaving the Baby at Home?

BY LINDA E. MARSHALL

TEN . . . NINE . . . EIGHT . . . Seven more days until I leave for China. This will be my second trip there and, if I listen to my back, my shoulders, and my husband, my first trip anywhere in many years sans computer.

But leaving my trusty computer behind seems daunting. How will I write anything new or polish my middle-grade work-in-progress without it?

Troubled, I consider purchasing an iPad or MacBook Air. Either would be lighter than my beloved two-year-old, six-pound MacBook Pro. *That* weighs almost as much as my firstborn did at birth.

I consider the situation: I carried *her* (my firstborn) for months. My husband carried her, too (although he didn't always like having her in our bed). Certainly we could carry my MacBook Pro on vacation through China.

Right? Wrong.

My husband—a kind, gentle man, but not a writer—insists it's too heavy. He insists I *can* take a vacation without it. *He* says I'll be fine.

*Hah!* Little does *he* know how attached I am to this creature.

"Just bring paper," he says. "And a pen. Or two."

Impossible. Unnerving. With paper and pen, my fingers can't fly. I'll have to stop and *think* about what I'm writing. The system is essential when I'm editing

and revising, but for a first draft, it's like trying to conceive a baby while taking birth control pills. It's not likely to come to fruition.

I spring into action and investigate buying an iPad and a separate keyboard (because I cannot type quickly on the iPad's built-in keyboard). The results: one folding keyboard (approximately \$100) plus iPad2 (approximately \$500), plus protection plan (\$80), iPad cover (approximately \$40), and software (+/- \$100), and I'm in business. Altogether the price approaches that of a MacBook Air: \$999 plus new software (I've used up all my licenses for my old Word program), plus the protection plan (\$249).

It's clear: New computer stuff would cost almost as much as my plane ticket. Not good.

Now what? Do I follow my husband's advice and try paper and pen? Do I try a keyboard with my iPhone? Or . . . ?

Another idea. I hear there's a lightweight, easy-to-store keyboard that weighs less than a newborn's wet diaper.

Could it work? Is there software? Could I use it to write, think, edit, save, and send? I decided to try.

I called the nice people at Apple (1-800-MY-APPLE) and explained my plight. With their guidance, I ordered an iEagle Foldable Wireless Keyboard (item number 8079964) made by HippieH ([www.hippih.com](http://www.hippih.com)). The keyboard cost about \$100 (including shipping) and arrived a few days later.

I set it up, paired it with my iPhone, purchased and installed software compatible with Word (Documents to Go, premium edition, \$16.99), and *tried* to write. Frustrating. Then I read the instructions.

The program and folding keyboard worked so well, I used it to write this essay.

I'm taking *this* new baby with me. It weighs only a few ounces, and it makes me very happy.

There's just one problem: My husband still doesn't want it in bed with us.

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