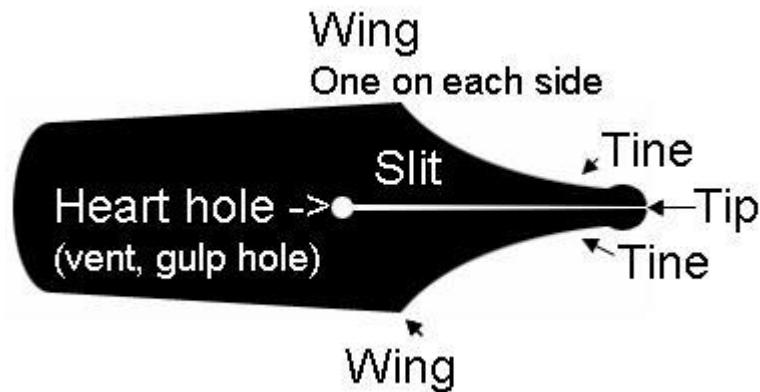


Behind the Nib - by Lou Metcalf



Adjusting the Ink Flow on a Nib

Examine your nib and feed under magnification. How wide is the slit at the tip? Is it as wide as the Grand Canyon? A slit that wide will act as a garden hose in depositing ink on paper. A slit that is fully closed will partially or completely restrict the flow of ink. The properly-cut slit is tapered slightly from the heart hole (also called the gulp hole, vent or breather hole) to tip, as shown in the picture.

While examining the nib, notice whether or not the nib aligns nicely along the feed. If the gap that isn't big enough to break the flow, the gap is allowing lots of ink to flow down to the tip. Bending the tines down closes the gap and reduces the flow. Narrowing the slit is best done by pulling the nib and **gently** bending one tine, then the other, downward towards the feed. The natural curve of the nib will cause the tine tips to move closer together. When you have adjusted each tine, make sure the two are aligned or your nib will be rough and scratchy.

If the flow is too lean, gently and minutely bend the tines upward until you've opened the nib just enough to create your desired flow. Making these adjustments should be practiced with inexpensive nibs until you get a feel for what you are doing. This is a learned art. You must practice to be come good at it. Again, take care that your tines are aligned before writing with your nib.

N.B. Ink flow can also be reduced by restricting the channels in the feed. This is a task best left to experts. I recommend Richard Binder if you choose to go that route. www.richardspens.com