

## Adeline Oka

This is a photo of Adeline and her good friend Bill, taken on the streets of downtown Corvallis. Bill is homeless and hitchhiked from the Florida Keys to Oregon to fulfill a lifelong dream: watching a live Beavers football game. Bill had a traumatic childhood in Pennsylvania. The one bright light during that dark period was seeing his name on TV. It was during the broadcast of a college football game. (Bill's last name is Beaver). This photo tells you a few things about Adeline:



1. She enjoys puns. Especially beaver puns.
2. She is friends with beavers and humans of all stripes. (She wants to be your friend too!) (Especially if you farm animals.) (Or a sauna.) (Or can prepare authentic Turkish food—she lived in Istanbul for a couple years and has been jonesing for some hunkar begendi and manti.)
3. Like Bill, she came here from Florida—Miami Beach, specifically. There she worked for the OAS (Organization of American States); co-founded a business magazine/media company (and through that hobnobbed with the Who's Who in South Florida's business, political, and entertainment scenes); as well as launched a debate program and taught writing courses in state prisons.
4. Like Bill, she got here via land. (17-day road trip. WITH HER MOTHER). Her passion for overland travel extends beyond cars: she loves long-distance train rides and rail infrastructure broadly. Once, she bought a 30-day Amtrak rail pass and circumnavigated the continental US.
5. Like Bill, she is a transient: in addition to the aforementioned sites, she has also lived and worked in the San Fernando Valley (her childhood home and also the "Porn Capital of the World"); western Massachusetts; Madrid, Spain (where she was a Fulbright grantee); the South Bronx (where she first gained experience in human subject research); the medieval hamlet of Cambridge, England (where she completed her master's in international development); and multiple cities in Indonesia.



6. Like Bill, she came to Corvallis in pursuit of beavers. In 2017, she read a gripping essay in the Paris Review about a famous skydiving beaver: in the 1940s, Geronimo was strapped onto a parachute and launched from a warplane as the test candidate (pilot, one might say. See #1 above, re: beaver puns) for an initiative by Idaho Fish and Wildlife to both relocate beavers into the deep woods, away from more peopled areas, whilst making use of a surplus for planes and parachutes leftover from World War II. (Seventy-six beavers were subsequently relocated this way). Months after the publication of this article, its

author, Elena Passarello—whom the New York Times called a “master” of the essay form—became Adeline’s academic advisor when she matriculated to OSU’s MFA in Creative Writing program as a Provost’s Fellow.

The thing about beavers is they are compulsive home builders. Adeline is taking a page from them and making a home for herself here, thereby putting to rest—for now—her wandering ways. Go Beavs!

\*hyperlink for “essay in the Paris Review”:

<https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2017/03/02/108316/>

