

# Coast: Writer enjoys variety of urban and rural settings

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The view from our condo in Portland includes at least 10 buildings of 10 stories or more. Our condo in Gearhart is very close to the beach and features an unparalleled vista of the ocean and the great mountain-like peninsula of Tillamook Head jutting out into the water.

Whenever I would ride the daddy bus west, or, during the pandemic, my wife and I would travel in our SUV in the same direction, we would breathe a palpable sigh of relief, feeling welcomed by clear sea air, no traffic, the sound of the ocean, and the view of Tillamook Head from our window. Our condo is small, but very comfortable, especially for the two of us, and as my wife, Ann, reliably comments, it has “the best view in Gearhart.”

We had begun alternating between the two locations before the pandemic.

We found that we like this alternation of locations. Why does this appeal? The obvious answers would be the beautiful expanse of the beach, the quiet of the small town, the south winds, and the fresh fish, on one hand, and the city buzz, the restaurants, the proximity of Powell’s Books, and friends and colleagues nearby, on the other.

But there are deeper underlying reasons.

## Peace in the outdoors

If I want to evoke an image of Gothic horror to anyone who knows me well, all I must do is utter the phrase “Brookwood Park.” That is a suburban cul-de-sac where I lived from age 9 to 17. It is located near the Albany airport in upstate New York.

It is where we moved after my parents divorced, and where I lived with my



The Gearhart Ridge Path Loop features scenic views.

Katherine Lacaze

mother, stepfather, brother and sister. We occupied a small white brick house in a fairly new suburban development. My brother and I shared a room. There was a yard with an overflowing septic tank to mow. There were surrounding woods and creeks and shopping centers. There were a few, but not very many, people my age around. Not far away was the mediocre elementary school I attended in fifth and sixth grade as well as the equally mediocre high school I graduated from. And there was, from my point of view at the time, and ever since, absolutely nothing.

My escapes from Brookwood Park felt lifesaving. It first occurred during summers at my father’s golf course home in North Carolina. Then there was my exit to college in Durham, North Carolina. My brother used

to say that he had never seen anyone change as much as I did when I came home for Thanksgiving freshman year. I remember how much more alive I felt. Part of the appeal of going to school there was the Duke Forest, a large expanse of forest near the Duke University campus in which one could roam for hours without encountering a soul. A little later, after acquiring my ‘69 green Mustang, I also found my way to Myrtle Beach on the South Carolina coast, and to the hiking trails in the mountains of western North Carolina.

After medical school and internship in North Carolina, I lived in Denver for my psychiatric residency. There I took off to the mountains on a regular basis to hike, and especially to ski. I learned all about feeling Rocky Mountain high, though I never became

a fan of John Denver.

Then I lived in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where I started my career and pursued further studies. I learned to appreciate the vitality of a more urban situation, with Boston across the Charles River, and sailboat racing in the Boston harbor. But living in the Boston area also came with a certain tension and a widely appreciated and vivid means of escape from it. All one had to do was drive south on Interstate 93 and cross the Sagamore Bridge to Cape Cod. The sensation of driving across the bridge with the water and Cape Cod in view was one of profound physical and spiritual relief. This was not unlike the feeling I later experienced riding to Gearhart over the coastal range on the daddy bus.

During my years in Cambridge, I also became

acquainted with some other urban settings. I spent a week per year from the early ‘80s on in Manhattan at professional meetings, and as I became acquainted with my future wife, Ann, I became increasingly familiar with one of North America’s oldest urban settings, New Orleans. My daughter ended up going to school in the Big Easy and living in our condo there for several years.

## ‘Try taking a good walk on the beach’

Then came my move to Oregon, and a 25-year settling into the version of town and country I found in the Northwest. There is no shortage of Brookwood Park-looking suburbs around Portland, but I have discovered a vital and growing urban setting where it was possible to participate in founding a

training institute for those interested in learning about and professionally immersing themselves in psychoanalysis. Many friends from Boston and elsewhere have come to visit and teach. We have often driven them out to the gorge to hike and see the river and the waterfalls.

Gradually we became acquainted with the coast. We explored several towns, and one time drove its entire length. Before too many years though we found that a sort of magnetic pull brought us repeatedly to Gearhart.

Part of it was that the drive over the coastal range on Highway 26 became our new Sagamore Bridge. Another part was that the quiet non-touristy town reminded Ann powerfully of the small Louisiana town on the Mississippi where she grew up. It had appealed to her much more than Brookwood Park and its memories of a newly broken family ever did to me. After a few years we found the condo with its amazing view.

In Gearhart the long walks on the ever-changing beach year-round became a reliable, recurring and soothing dream of sorts. I am reminded at those times of one of my mother’s repeated pieces of wisdom. She had a deep emotional attachment to the Jersey Shore and had many early family memories connected with that seaside location. It was close to where she grew up in Montclair, a New Jersey bedroom community.

She would say at times of discouragement, frustration or disappointment, when no solution seemed to present itself, “Try taking a good walk on the beach.”

This essay was produced through a class taught by Tom Hallman Jr., a Pulitzer Prize winning reporter at The Oregonian.










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<b>Styrofoam</b>	<b>Plastic bags</b>	<b>Food containers</b>	<b>Snack bags &amp; wrappers</b>	<b>Plastic utensils &amp; straws</b>	<b>Food Residue</b>	<b>Napkins &amp; Paper Towels</b>
Why not at the curb?						
Styrofoam cannot be recycled in our curbside program. These items contaminate other recyclable items.	Plastic bags clog the machinery at the sorting facility and contaminate the paper stream.	No market for this item. These items have contain food waste and can also contaminate other recyclable items.	Made with a mixture of material - such as plastic and aluminum, making it very difficult to recycle.	No market for this low-grade plastic. These items can also contaminate other recyclable items.	Food residue inside containers leads to mold and germs. Always rinse or wipe out containers before placing in the cart.	Paper fibers get shorter each time they are recycled. By the time they become a towel or tissue, the fibers are too short to be recycled again.
Where should it go?						
Place these items in your trash cart.	Take to a participating retail store. Consider using canvas or other reusable bags.	Consider placing them in your home composting pile, or your trash cart.	Place in your trash cart. Consider using reusable snack bags.	Place in your trash or consider reusable utensils & straws to cut down on plastic waste.	Rinse or wipe to remove food residue before recycling.	Put in your home compost system or in your trash cart. Reduce by using cloth towels.

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