

Drift



Jeff Hayes

Drift

There are many
This story is of one

EXCERPT
**JEFF
HAYES**



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Dedicated to Mona

Her philosophy of gentleness
realizes possibilities.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Prologue</u>	1
<u>Drift</u>	
<u>01 – Lenny Drove</u>	4
<u>02 – A Mojito for Jane</u>	12
<u>03 – Sleep Tight</u>	20
<u>04 – Away</u>	24
<u>05 – Travel</u>	30
<u>06 – A Quick Stop</u>	40
<u>07 – A Tale in Need of a Telling</u>	44
<u>08 – Solution to a Problem</u>	51
<u>09 – House Hunting</u>	63
<u>10 – Nadine</u>	75
<u>11 – Jim is Distraught</u>	88
<u>12 – Blange has an Interview</u>	108
<u>13 – Reunion</u>	121
<u>14 – Next Day</u>	132
<u>15 – Lenny and Friend Take Some Sun</u>	157
<u>16 – Terry has a Date</u>	174
<u>17 – Every Sunset is Precious</u>	201
<u>18 – Blange Departs</u>	215
<u>19 – Reflection</u>	233
<u>20 – The End My Friend</u>	245
<u>21 – Glide Path</u>	250
<u>22 – Enlistment</u>	252
<u>23 – Jane</u>	264
<u>24 – At Last</u>	274
<u>25 – Tension</u>	285
<u>Wind</u>	294
<u>About Jeff Hayes</u>	295
<u>Connect with Jeff Hayes</u>	296
<u>Summary</u>	297

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Prologue

Time exists as a direction, a constant. The constant is your Present. The concepts of past and future are illusions; their existence is given substance by your misperception.

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DRIFT

DRIFT

CHAPTER I
Lenny Drove

Lenny drove up to the red lights flashing at the train crossing, and stopped. This was a small crossing where they didn't bother to install crossing guard arms to block the way. Waiting was the right thing to do. It was a reasonably warm day. The drive today was top-less, out enjoying the sexy look of the convertible.

He liked to tell people, “A convertible with the top up has a goofy look to it, like a run-way model walking with airs, wearing a yellow PVC rain slicker.”

The style of car and man was perfect. No simple matter of wind could disturb the gel of his spiky hair. The air conditioning was on full blast to take the edge off the sun's heat. No train was in sight. That was all right with him. He would wait. Alone.

DRIFT

A young boy on a bicycle appeared. His bicycle looked the right size for him, perhaps next year; but this year he couldn't quite reach the seat, and his progress was a bit wobbly for it. Struggling along, he approached the car. A cat darted out of a roadside bush. The front wheel went to one side, the boy went to the other. That was it, all he needed; he collapsed into a heap with his bicycle onto the ground, beside the car.

Lenny had been thoughtlessly watching the boy's approach in the side mirror. The slow progress bored him. Adjusting the rear-view mirror, he scrutinized his hair.

"I look good," he told himself.

The noise of the boy's fall brought him back to the moment. There was a soft moaning. He turned around. There on the ground was the boy, tangled in his bicycle. He looked up to Lenny. The tears were beginning to water his eyes, pleading for comfort. Lenny stared at the boy. Neither moved. Moments passed. The boy looked down, embarrassed. The ground accepted his tears, without comment. Lenny continued to stare. More moments passed. His former emotionless existence began to form a single emotion; he could feel it grow, swelling inside: disgust.

Looking at the boy, he saw now it wasn't just the bicycle that was over-sized, the clothes were too. His shirt hung down loose at the neck. The baggy jeans had a fresh rip, exposing a skinny knee, which was covered in dust. Gravel was pushed

DRIFT

under the skin where it hung loose. Small beads of blood had begun to leak through the abrasion, making a kind of mud with the dust. A movement came to Lenny, to his lips; it had the look of a grin. He knew where this would go.

“You are weak, boy,” he said quietly.

The boy continued looking at the ground.

He spoke again, a bit louder, “You are weak. Get yourself up. Get out of here. What is wrong with you?” He took a small breath. “Are you stupid, or something? Are you a dummy? Do you make your slutty mother wish she would have finished another bottle of gin and had you aborted?”

The boy stopped sniveling; he looked up at Lenny, eyes bleary with tears. His mouth hung open, amazed an adult was talking to him this way. Lenny felt powerful. He gathered himself to finish with the boy, to tell him how ridiculous his over sized clothes and bicycle were. As he opened his mouth to deliver the blow, he noticed movement in the car's side mirror. He paused, watching the movement in the edge of his vision. Leaning further out of the car, he spoke loudly. It made him tingle, feeling the beginnings of his arousal.

“Are you OK little boy? Oh my, what has happened?” He said this, then turned his expressive, now, compassionate look, to meet the eyes of a young woman rushing up.

DRIFT

She had been jogging. That's what she does when she wants to make her thoughts disappear. She had been doing a lot of that lately, jogging, trying to evade herself. But of late, her thoughts have become harder to overcome. The circuit path outside the city took her onto the road which crosses the train tracks. A boy was struggling up ahead on a bicycle. There was a car waiting at the train crossing. The crossing's red lights were flashing. She had been trying to lose herself, focusing on the lights flashing, back and forth, back and forth, left, right, left, right. Her pace kept the rhythm. She saw the boy fall, and the cat run across the road, continuing into the bushes. It was a black cat. She increased her pace, losing time with the lights, but then, gaining it again—running now. Clearly, the boy was just sitting there on his fallen bicycle since it collapsed to the ground.

“He must have been stunned from the fall,” she thought.

The little boy just stared up at the man, who was saying something. She didn't catch the words on the wind. The man said something again. This time she heard his voice—his words were clear. He asked the boy if he was alright. The man then turned full face to look at her as she arrived at the car. His eyes seemed to shiver, like heat haze in the distance. Then, after a moment, her focus cleared. They were gray, his eyes were gray.

“Hi, oh I'm glad you're here.”, the man said to her as he climbed out of the car. “Could you help me. This little boy has

DRIFT

fallen from his bicycle and hurt himself. I have a first aid kit in the trunk. Do you know first aid? I'm afraid I'm not very good with that; and then, there's the blood.”

She looked away from the man with a slight shake of her head, confused. She noticed there was a boy on the ground by the car, as though seeing him for the first time. The man stood over him. The boy looked only slightly hurt, but he seemed scared and disoriented.

The thought came to her, “He must have fallen from his bicycle. The fall was a surprise. He has torn his pants and scraped his knee.”

She spoke, feeling a need to explain her presence, “Yes, of course. I was out jogging. A first-aid kit in your trunk. Yes, good. Let's have a look at you little boy. Are you OK?”

The boy turned stiffly to the woman, his eyes dull and resigned.

The scraped knee had been scrubbed clean and bandaged without complaint. The first aid kit and her skill applying it had proved sufficient. They both agreed the boy must be driven home. She had to ask him several times for the address. He hadn't spoken in more than a whispered mumble. It was near. She knew the street, but hadn't seen the boy before. The bicycle was strapped down on the luggage rack over the trunk.

DRIFT

There wasn't a possibility of him riding home. The bicycle's front wheel was bent.

“It would require replacing,” Lenny had said.

A thought came to her, “Perhaps he was not right in the head; maybe he was this way before the accident. His little crash shouldn't have scared him into the state he was in.”

They had to put the boy physically into the car, lifting him into the back seat. She wanted him in the front seat where there was more room to stretch out his injured leg, but he twisted and jerked so violently she was afraid they would drop him. So, the back was where they managed. Moving the passenger seat as far forward as it would go, she climbed in beside him and put her arm over his shoulder to comfort his stiffness, and to keep him from leaping out of the car. Though the man said the boy would be fine sitting by himself, she insisted on remaining beside him. He shrugged and turned the car around for the drive back. Gunning the motor down the straight road, the rear-view mirror was adjusted to take in the view fully. The crossing's red lights had stopped flashing. He had noticed that as well.

She had been glancing thoughtlessly at the scenery passing, the blurred motion. Suddenly her thoughts snapped back. “It's a bit windy on the boy. Do you think you could put the top up?”

DRIFT

“Well, yeah, I was just thinking that. But then I remembered, the mechanism is broken. The garage have had the parts on order for a while now. You know how those promises go, ‘We’ll have it fixed, real soon now.’ Ha-ha!”

Lenny let the conversation drop at that point. One has to choose their battles. A small tactical retreat can often have great rewards. Her attention went back to the scenery, forgetting herself.

He said under his breath, “The boy fit. The woman was perfect; she was more than he could have asked for. Asked for, yeah well, not really more.”

She heard him laugh out words, but then changed her mind convincing herself it was a cough.

The thought came to Lenny, “It was reasonable to be honest with one's self, on occasion. This was such a time. Have I played this role before, and again?”

He said under his breath, “Why did I just think that?”

“I'm Jane,” she said, leaning forward. “Jane.”

He could feel her breath warm on his neck. “Jane in pain,” he whispered, grinning. “My gain.”

He turned his head slightly, angling toward her. He said, “Lenny. You are a real life saver, Jane. I just wouldn't have known what to do back there. You are a kind person. Do you know how lucky I am you came along? Your timing was exceptional, punctual even; that's what I think.”

DRIFT

“Thank you, Lenny,” she said smiling, pleased from his praise. He watched her from the rear-view mirror; she leaned back into the seat, saying quietly, “Lenny.” He could read his name on her lips.

“It is done. The future of her is written,” he chuckled, smiling a smile from a different origin than Jane's just now.

She turned and looked at the boy's profile. She offered him a smile too. Rigid as a stick figure, he stared straight ahead, sightless, into the back of the seat; it was like he was asleep, though his eyes remained open. The wind blew his hair around comically. After a moment, he blinked mechanically. She worried: was there a bump on his head she missed feeling?

“Lenny, maybe the little boy has a concussion. Should we take him to the hospital instead of home?”

Lenny pretended not to hear. He thought about how to divert her. “Sorry, what? Did you say something?”

She opened her mouth to repeat herself, but then the strangest thing happened: she couldn't remember what she had just said, though the inconsistency didn't bother her. Instead, her thoughts became about the wind: how it had cooled her off nicely, though she felt sticky. A cool shower would be just the thing; or a swim, yes, a swim would be even better. She relaxed back against the seat, at peace with herself.

CHAPTER II

A Mojito for Jane

Lenny switched off the motor. He looked over at Jane. The breeze played with her hair gently. The sound emanating from him would rightly be called a sigh, and an honest one at that. She was truly lovely. There was regret in the moment's passing that could not be acknowledged. It was made short work of by bravado.

He said cheerfully. "My GPS says we are here."

Jane woke with a start. She looked around. Her eyes were itchy and she couldn't get them to focus—it was so bright. She jerked up in the seat. Her legs were tangled with each other under the dash. Her back was sore. "No, this isn't right," she thought. "How did I get in the front seat?"

Looking at Lenny, she tried to say, "Where's the boy? Where are we?" but she couldn't manage her voice, the words came out wrong.

DRIFT

“I'm certainly at a loss for what you just said,” Lenny joked, grinning at her.

“The boy?” she managed to say.

“The boy? Oh, well we dropped him off at his mother's. Don't you remember? You're such a sleepy head.”

She answered him by stretching forward, away from the car seat, arching her chest, and breaking out in a big, face scrunching yawn.

Lenny was distracted by Jane's movement: her shirt was pulled tight around her chest, her trim tummy peeking out. He lost his voice, staring at her. The car's motor made ticking sounds counting time as it cooled off. As she adjusted her shirt, he came back to himself. He looked up to her eyes.

“Your directions were impeccable,” Lenny said, rediscovering his voice. “We walked the boy up to the front door. You rang the bell. His mother came to the door. She was such a nice lady,” he paused. He wanted Jane to be enough in the moment to live his words. He stared at her face, emotionless. She looked back to him, but her eyes were still glassy with sleep.

Lenny snapped on his smile and continued. “The boy's mother had been quite worried; it was getting late and her boy hadn't come home yet. He had been gone hours later than promised. She was so relieved when we brought him back home. Her little boy looked so happy, she had said. She asked if we had taken him for an ice cream.”

DRIFT

He saw Jane's eyes had remained glassy, completely involved in the story. The smile was creeping broader, taking over the rest of his face.

“I put the boy's bicycle in their shed, in the side yard. When I came back, you three were talking so cheerful, in high spirits. It was really nice to see your glow, Jane. I wanted to give the boy's mom some bucks for them to go out for a nice dinner, maybe some pizza and mini golf.” That last bit was corny, but what the hell; he had a captive audience, so to speak. Jane had been reliving Lenny's every word as though she had been there, which Lenny was confirming to her, she had been.

“She thought it was too much, the money I mean, but I insisted.” Lenny thought he should wrap this up and get on with the next. “I told her, 'So long.' She thanked us again for bringing her boy back to her. She gave me a hug, and the little boy, well, he gave me such a hug I could feel it from his whole heart. It was so touching. Then I said good-bye to you too. I thought you lived nearby and you'd want to finish your jog. I walked to my car to leave. You followed me after a few seconds and asked if you could come along. I said, 'Sure! But, it's a ways to go.' I asked you if you had the time. The next thing you said was so funny. I smile just remembering it. You looked down to your watch and then up to me and said, 'it's 2:30.' I said, 'So it seems, so it seems. Hop in!' You did.

“We turned and waved bye-bye to the boy and his mom standing in their door way and drove out of town. You know,

DRIFT

we weren't driving but a few minutes when you just conked out. You must not have known how tired you really were. You looked so sweet asleep in the seat. I switched on the tunes and enjoyed the company of the wind as we drove down the road. And now, here we are. We've arrived!"

She looked at him a moment, then she looked at her watch. 3:15. A quick nap; yes, she did feel refreshed.

"So, we are where now, exactly?" she asked, looking at the house, then at the surrounding country side. She thought, "This guy has some land."

"The now is presently at my home," he said, still grinning at her. "Come on in."

Following him across the walkway to the front door, she noticed she was walking in-step with him. She purposely took a misstep to change her rhythm. Lenny heard her step change; he smiled to himself, enjoying the act of defiance. Walking up to the house, Jane was wondering about the odd way his answer had been phrased about where they were.

They entered the house through a big elaborately carved door of the darkest wood grain she had ever seen. The house was welcomingly cool inside. It seemed a bit dark after the brightness outside.

"Hey, so what are you drinking?" he asked her as they entered the living room. She looked at the bar in the corner; it looked professionally stocked.

DRIFT

“How about a Mojito? Are you set for that?” she asked cheerfully.

“But of course, for you, my dear,” he said, giving a charming wink. “I’ve fresh berries and mint in the fridge. Let’s step out back and pick us some limes.”

She followed out the sliding door. There, a nicely oiled redwood deck wrapped around the back side of the house to where the ground sloped slightly away. The other side of the deck led to a pool. It had curvy sides that wandered back and forth, rather organically. She liked that—rectangular pools were so soulless. The far side of the pool curved, ending in a rock water fall. There was a walkway up the back, with a spa tub on top. “Nice,” she said, stretching out the word lusciously. “You have a tub with a view.”

“Yes I do. Just right for two.” he said, with a comical innocent look.

She felt a little tingle down under from his attention.

“Over here, down the steps, I have my little garden. It isn’t much, as you can see; but, most importantly, it does have a lime tree. They look alright don’t they,” he said.

She noticed the tree had an amazing amount of limes on it. Reaching out, she touched a pair of lime twins, feeling their texture in her fingers, firm and delicious. She turned her head from the tree, releasing the limes, to see Lenny was staring at her chest, smiling serenely.

DRIFT

“The limes, I mean,” he added as a postscript, looking now into her eyes. “They are alright, aren't they?”

She knew at that moment, she liked him looking at her. And, she liked that tingling too.

He finished slicing the limes and brought the muddling equipment out on the bar, a large granite mortar and pestle. Jane watched intently. His movements were purposeful, precise without indecision, graceful—not at all like his behavior with the boy, when they first met. He put a generous handful of berries in the mortar with the limes, mint leaves and a small helping of coarse sugar, organic, she thought. She didn't recognize the label on the bottle. The writing looked Spanish. She spoke some Spanish, but the words didn't make any sense. Must be some esoteric Cuban rum, she thought. Then, he added some other liquor.

“To absent friends and those we found,” Lenny said raising his glass to Jane's.

“To you, Lenny, the perfect host.”

“Well don't be so quick to judge me, Jane. You've yet to taste dinner. My cooking skills might cause you to rethink your opinion.”

“Well, judging from your muddling skills, I have high expectations of your cooking. This Mojito is fantastic!”

“It's all about the ingredients' freshness and the rum. But the most important ingredient that can't be substituted without

DRIFT

diluting the drink's essence, and is a very rare find, I might add: the company the drink is shared with.”

They paused, looking into each others eyes. The moment stretched on. Jane could hear a clock somewhere in the house chime the hour. The thought came so suddenly to her head she had to blurt it out, “How about a swim?” She was curious where that idea had come from; it seemed so exactly right.

“I saw how you looked at the pool. I was wondering when you were going to ask. The water will be delicious. You do some laps. I'll take some sun.”

She walked out to the pool and continued along to the far end. Lenny arranged the lounge chairs, dragging them out into the sun, by the pool. He laid towels on the chairs. Jane looked down the length of the pool and across at him. He opened the suntan lotion and squeezed some into his hand, rubbing it across his chest and onto his shoulders. She began removing her clothes. She stepped out of her running shoes and rolled off the socks, slowly. Her hair hung down long over her face. She looked through it discretely at him, her long look letting him know she was enjoying him enjoying her. Next came off her top; she pulled it over her head and shook her hair so it fell sensuously on her shoulders and down her back. Her running bra was new, thankfully—that was a bit of luck. It was not one of her favorites but maybe one day it would be. Her old favorites were some kept long beyond thread-bare, but she

DRIFT

couldn't see to throw them out: they were old friends. It would have been an embarrassing moment now in her performance to reveal holey underwear. This part of the dance would have passed faster than it deserved to be.

“Mental note to self: clean out the underwear drawer!” she thought. Continuing, she ran her hands up her sides, crossing them and worked her fingers under the bra, pulling up and over her head. Then, down the shorts and panties went as one, to the ground. She stepped out of them, flinging both up with a flick of her foot. They were caught casually and dropped onto the pile with the rest of her clothes. Walking out to the pool edge, she felt the sun deep in her skin. Her bikini line tingled from the nakedness of the recent Brazilian.

Springing forward, she dived softly into the pool with hardly a splash, arching under the water luxuriously. Slowly swimming, the water's coolness caressed down the length of her body in waves. She broke the surface having swum most of the pool's length. The feeling at that moment was a memory she kept with her. It would later be thought of as a peaceful happiness, a letting go of all that day-by-day baggage she hadn't realized was accumulated, until it fell away. Remembering how Lenny had looked at her earlier, she knew he was sharing the moment.

She looked to him, her breath deep in her lungs. “This is right.”

“I know,” was his short, cryptic response.

CHAPTER III

Sleep Tight

They made love that night bringing fulfillment she hadn't known before. Jane had been with a few men, but Lenny was different. He was more sensitive, responding to her desires, sustaining her until she could only think of the now of him inside her; he maintained her on the plateau of ecstasy, the climaxes rolling her along in waves.

“He shares the moment with me,” she thought. “He is so inside my head.”

Afterwards, her dream started out softly with her continuing to desire his touch, and glowing from their passion. She wasn't sure she was dreaming at this point. Perhaps they continued to make love into the night, releasing herself to him, drifting in a heightened state of awake and asleep.

But later, she thought she must really had fallen deeply asleep. She dreamed Lenny continued to make love with her,

DRIFT

but the moments had become confusing: his love making had changed from soft and deeply passionate, to sex more like a porn movie: aggressive, even a bit violent. It was still just the two of them copulating, but they were changing positions frequently, like on command from a movie director, until the fade to black.

Jane had slept deeply. She didn't typically remember her dreams, and this had been one of those nights. She awoke on her back, in Lenny's bed. Her body and the bed sheets were wet from her sweat. It was light outside. She wasn't aware what time it was, but thought it was still early.

Lenny was awake, propping himself up on his elbow, looking at her. "What have you been doing in your dreams, my dear, to wake up so wet?" he asked her sweetly. His eyes looked at her knowingly but with just the slightest bit of surprise.

Jane could still feel the echo of the rapturous electricity her spine had conducted to her head; the throbbing continued in her belly. She stared at Lenny. No words came to her lips, though they were parted, open. Her tongue felt huge like it didn't belong in her mouth, like it wasn't hers. Lenny kissed her fully on the lips, his tongue touching hers. She tasted him; for a morning kiss, he tasted good, like citrus. For a moment she was self-conscious of what she tasted like. Then, her tension

DRIFT

passed. She began thinking about limes, and relaxed. He breathed his breath into her lungs, raising her chest. She held his breath deep in her, then responded, emptying her lungs into his. She could feel him taken aback by the gift. He tensed up just the slightest at first, then he relaxed, letting her diaphragm squeeze the last of the air into him.

Jane got up to finally enjoy the shower she had been thinking about yesterday. The shower was a spacious luxury, the hot water deeply penetrated her. “The pack is off my back. I am smiling,” she thought, feeling the lightness of happiness. “Take a picture, it will last longer.”

Laughing, she rubbed the shampoo into her hair for a second wash, then disappeared under the water spray for the rinse. Waiting for the conditioner to penetrate allowed time for further enjoyment exploration. After toweling off, she met Lenny in the kitchen.

“What scrumptious breakfast have you made for me this morning?” she asked him cheerfully, bouncing with her breasts into the room, nude.

“You look positively aglow, Jane,” he said, his eyes slowly looking, inspecting her, toe to head. “The shower has met your expectations, I assume? Good Morning!”

“I found a sliver of soap and a towel, if that's what you're referring to,” she joked playfully back at him.

DRIFT

“Oh, a sliver of soap. Did I leave that much?” he winked. “Your limited wardrobe is in the wash. Shouldn't take much time in the dryer.”

“I'm dressed appropriate for breakfast then, am I?” she said, pirouetting, showing herself off to him.

“My dear, I believe you are dressed appropriate for any meal of the day, formal or informal, and then some.”

She performed a deep curtsy, holding out her imaginary dress, dipping her head.

“So I see, so I see. I hope Eggs Benedict is within your dietary restriction. I made the Hollandaise from scratch in celebration of your victorious shower, and now I would add, your appropriate entrance.”

“I think I can make a dietary exception, in allowance to the hard work you have performed for me; and, your cooking skills appear exceptional too.”

“To do less would be a disservice to you, my dear. Now, eat your eggs before the sauce gets cold. It's not good cold.”

Jane thought he looked serious, but a moment later his cheery smile was back. She wondered what was up with this guy. She knew what was up inside his pants, a large something she had every intention of relieving him of—soon as this scrumptious breakfast was consumed, of course—a woman needs her strength.

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CHAPTER IV

Away

*R*enny came up from behind and embraced her around the waist. She sighed and relaxed against him.

“I’ve got to leave you for a few days, some business that is overdue is in need of my personal attention.”

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CHAPTER V

Travel

A car turned into the entrance before the acres of parking lot surrounding an office complex. The campus consisted of four buildings facing each other, each with a humble height of twenty floors. The story of how The Church got into real estate was Lenny's wedge into business with them.

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CHAPTER VI

A Quick Stop

Pulling out of the parking lot, Lenny made his calls after the meeting with Jim. The arrangements were quick. It was just that easy. The kid gave his location, which he entered into the car's GPS. The address was in a suburb that would take less time to get to than he needed to put his plan into motion. He screwed the bluetooth headset into his ear, auto-dialing Arnie's private number.

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CHAPTER VII
A Tale in Need of a Telling

The phone rang. Lawrence heard it in his dream. His dream-self said sleepily, “let the machine get it.” His waking-self bounced out of bed, tripping on the pile of his pants and shoes. Last night had been spent working at the restaurant, busing tables. Arriving home late and exhausted, he had skipped showering, knowing he'd regret that, but was too tired to bother. When Jillian got home from her shift at the hospital, she woke him, nagging about putting his shit away before going to bed.

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CHAPTER VIII

Solution to a Problem

Lenny pulled up to the curb, opening the passenger door to a young man; he wasn't much of a kid, as Jim had described him. Lenny checked him out as he held the car door. The kid was in his mid twenties. He looked worn older than that, like a man burning his life out quickly.

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CHAPTER IX

House Hunting

The street map had been stubborn in revealing its secret. When finally it relented, the knowledge was not what Jane had been expecting. Frustrated, she pushed it away from her, not believing one street could be so elusive in such a small town. The third cup of coffee hadn't helped her memory. Picking up her cup, she swirled the dregs. They settled into a fascinating pattern of abstract noise. It demanded her attention.

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CHAPTER X
Nadine

The rest of the day Jane couldn't get back to her normal rhythm. After the weirdness at the boy's house in the morning, what remained of her day was calm. The only task was grocery shopping. While driving across town, the realization came that something was wrong with her; she had become absent-minded about the simplest things.

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CHAPTER XI

Jim is Distraught

It surprised him to have missed the call. He jabbed at the bluetooth earpiece, hanging up on the voicemail. The device fell out of his ear in protest, but he caught it before it could journey under the seat.

Replaying the words fresh in his head, listening for nuance, “Lenny, I need to talk with you now. Please call me back soon as you get this message.”

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CHAPTER XII

Blange has an Interview

Jane woke into her bleary morning. Light was weakly illuminating the bedroom curtains. She looked at Henry. He was curled up on a pillow staring at her as if he wanted to ask, “So what's it gonna be today? You gonna get up, or what?”

Her answer was to roll over, away from the cat's scrutiny. The images of last night's dream accompanied her weakly, drifting off back to sleep.

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CHAPTER XIII

Reunion

Pulling back onto the highway, there weren't any thoughts for Jim. Lenny was laughing to himself about the Swan Guy in the park from earlier today.

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CHAPTER XIV

Next Day

Renny woke in the bed alone, empty of Lucy. Reaching over, he felt the wrinkled depression in the bottom sheet where her body had slept.

“No warmth remains,” he sighed, withdrawing his hand.

He rolled over and swung his feet to the floor. Sitting on the edge of the bed hunched over, he stared sightless at the floor. The night stand clock ticked over a few minutes which passed without his notice.

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CHAPTER XV
Lenny and Friend Take Some Sun

When Lenny came back to his hotel, the room had been made up. He looked at the adjoining door before opening it. Stepping inside, the other room was coldly empty, scrubbed clean of Lucy's physical presence.

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CHAPTER XVI
Terry has a Date

The gray house was before her. Its banality was ominous. This was not where she wanted to be. The occupant was not who she wanted to be with. This meet was not of her making but it was the burden she chose, or so she thought. The remorse was resigned for him to remove. The gravel crunched under her feet until the patter up the concrete steps.

As the door knocker banged to be noticed, she emptied her thoughts, flushing the last with, “Lenny, you better be good, you really better.”

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CHAPTER XVII
Every Sunset is Precious

The mobile phone chirped. The timing was opportune, and expected. They had been looking into each others eyes. He smiled apologetically. She released her part of their embrace, allowing him to reach for the device. Tilting the screen, they read the caller's name, "Terry."

Lenny looked at Tammy, saying out loud what they both had been thinking, "Here we go."

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CHAPTER XVIII
Blange Departs

Henry raced through the house tearing at the carpet, disappearing into the bedroom. She was following him, but paused at the front door entryway. A compulsion drew her to the door. She stood there, hand hovering above the knob. The compulsion was at her again. The door was flung open.

“Hi Jane.”

“Hello, Blange,” she said to the man standing before her. “You are back.”

“Is it soon? Too soon, perhaps? Am I inconveniencing you?” he said, increasing his smile through each question.

“No. I'm glad to see you.”

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CHAPTER XIX

Reflection

Jane reached through the window, retrieving the day-pack from the passenger seat. Walking away, she pushed at the fob. Lenny's car chirped as the windows rolled up and the doors locked. It was a short walk across the grass to where she wanted to go, isolating herself from the park's distractions. She had been thinking about this spot since rolling out of bed, bleary eyed and dehydrated.

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CHAPTER XX
The End My Friend

Renny and Tammy were enjoying a soak in the spa tub. The night was clear and bright with stars. The moon hadn't come up over the mountains, but from the glow, the moon rise would be soon.

Tammy saw a woman come out of the house and onto the patio. She waved.

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CHAPTER XXI

Glide Path

Renny waited. He had stopped the topless convertible a short distance before the railway crossing guard arms. Looking at the hypnotic flashing lights, back forth, back forth, a feeling came to him. It was an expectation. Something seemed to want to happen.

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CHAPTER XXII

Enlistment

She rode into Farley fixated on a single immediate goal. The goal was simple, threading the morning's commuter traffic. Focus was all that was required. Scenery passed across her visor without distraction. The bridges were approached over the twin creeks trisecting the town. They were traversed, no distraction. The humming scream of tires on bridge metal grating faded, no distraction.

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CHAPTER XXIII

Jane

The light was dim. What was the day was graced by the gray of fog. A woman jogged alone along the surf line. The beach unrolled before her pace. It was featureless. No kelp. No detritus. No birds. Small waves drummed with a faltering rhythm pushing up the sand; exhausting their journey, they fell back, exposing the beach. The wet firmness repeatedly received her feet leaving lifting prints for the water movement to play with.

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CHAPTER XXIV

At Last

The sensation of motion dissipated. A perception of self emerged, spiraling back to the center. The movement had stopped. A direction of up resolved from her core. It joined the collection of answers of the now of continuity. The most immediate vied for her attention. It was water. Water required to be recognized. It was sensuously enveloping, floating her gently suspended within a bath of bubbles.

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CHAPTER XXV

Tension

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Wind

Jailed by perceptions, assumptions dictate a progression of events constraining one's dwindling passion to seek escape. The parade of intoxicants, of women and lifestyle, optimized for Bacchanal fulfillment, attend the trace of a circle defined by a decreasing radius. But what is a life free from want? Free to revel in the dearest desires formed. Free to advance the shackles of a reluctance to depart. When the expected day arrives, the education of mentors is drawn into the inevitable conclusion; there remain surprises to perform, regaling in the thrill that surpasses the repercussions. After all has passed, why avoid consequences when one has forgotten more than one knows.

THE END.

ABOUT JEFF HAYES

Jeff Hayes has been working for many years as a Software Engineering Consultant- not to be confused with his evil-twin, of no relation. Now located in Switzerland as an employee with a financial firm, he has found several hours free in his daily commute. Daydreaming out the carriage window on the green Swiss countryside, the idea came to him to consider the train commute as renting a public space office. Balancing the distraction of the fellow passengers with life within office space cube walls, thus began Jeff's side work realizing his thoughts into words.

Though many pets and a few horses have graced Jeff's life, he presently finds himself pet free, for the short term.

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CONNECT WITH JEFF HAYES

Jeff enjoys talking with his readers for reflections words can bring. Their impressions can be fascinating and unexpected.

He can be reached at his website, deppli.com



Summary

[Drift](#), a novel.

A little boy's accident appears to bring people together in help, passion, and destruction. The soon following orchestrated tragedy blurs the nature of reality, resulting in decisions with unexpected consequences, in the Panpsychism world of the novel, [Drift](#).

The tale poses the nature of perception question. When one achieves mastery of perception, does it follow they become the master of one's self? The answer that follows is attended by another question. Can the daily events in one's life sum the essence of that life?