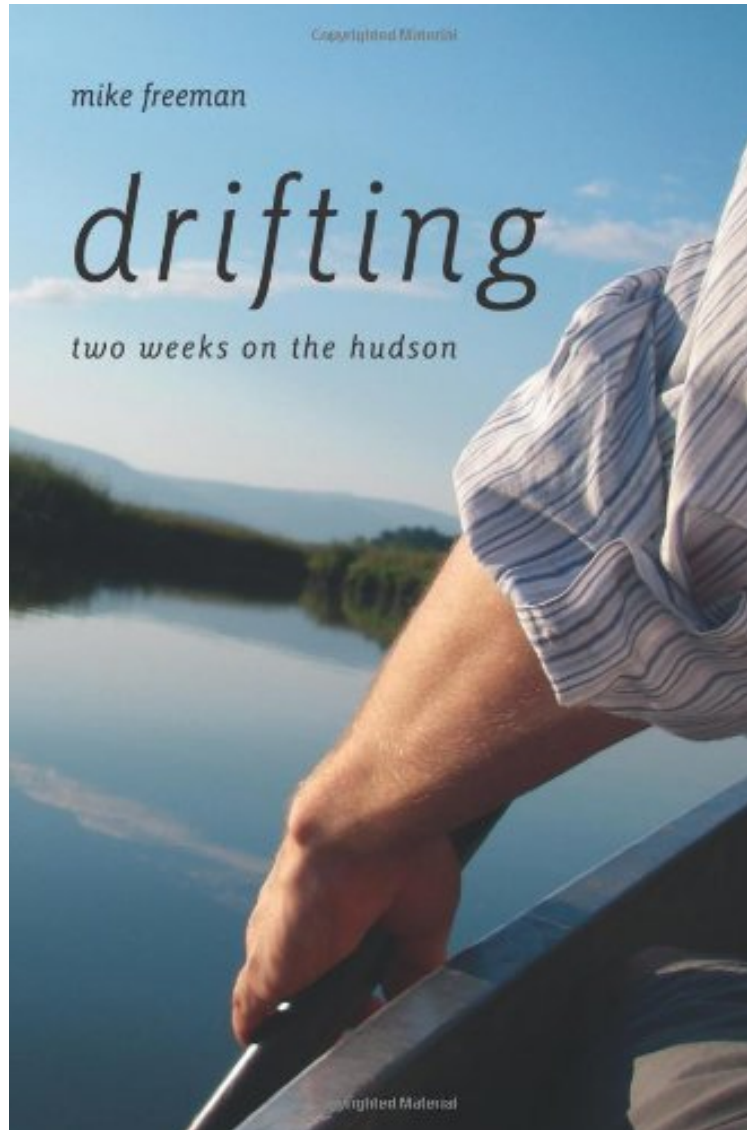


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## Drifting: Two Weeks on the Hudson (Excelsior Editions)

*Mike Freeman*

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**Mike Freeman : Drifting: Two Weeks on the Hudson (Excelsior Editions)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Drifting: Two Weeks on the Hudson (Excelsior Editions)*:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. naturaliter anima christiana By James A. Sullivan Mike Freeman's book *Drifting* is too humanistic, too naked in the right sense to avoid the God question and the church question. There is here no "fashionable atheism" by which the author seeks to hide from moral commitments or deny the metaphysics of things, the spiritual life as he calls it. Instead we find the experience on the Hudson awakening in him thoughts of Emily Dickinson, of being close to God but feeling also the undertow drawing us into nothingness. Yet in the contest

between God and no God, he seems to come down on the side of theism, without of course the prop of a church or a revelation. He mentions Dawkins and the late Christopher Hitchens, popularizers of atheism but seems cool to their dismissal of God. Perhaps one man in a canoe coming upon the "torrent at Hadley's Falls" in the Hudson River is more aware of hierophanies or the in-breaking of the divine than any academic agnostic might be. His friend Bill McKibben, a Christian of a kind debunks Original Sin. "There may be six Christians left," says McKibben, who actually accept the dogma. Yet Freeman is slow to quit the aboriginal calamity. How explain our ancestors sense of their wretchedness and need for redemption, he thinks. How indeed. Here he has Flannery O'Connor on his side; people can be terribly cruel, even when they emerge from group therapy or the White Horse Inn. Tertullian, the Roman lawyer who remained a pagan until some time in mid-life when he converted to Christianity has given us the phrase "naturally Christian animal." The term is not popular today, inasmuch as it suggests that Christianity may be the end point for many lives that are given over to a pale shade of that faith; so many strivers in the row who bear a clouded impress of the fulness of Christianity but may be held back for one reason or another. In this syncretistic age where all religions from scientology to Christianity are accorded a substantive equality, we blanch at convert stories. What's the point? But what are we to make of Walker Percy or Dorothy Sayers, of T.S. Eliot and Tolkein? There is in Drifting this naturaliter. It is fed by streams of family piety; this honoring of WASPS, of grouse hunting with his Dad in Pennsylvania, or the recounting of his wife's Irish heritage. Ethnicity loses its fiber when it loses its religious compass. Why was the wedding ceremony so prominently displayed in The Deer Hunter? Whether we are running away from it or running to it in desperation, religion bulks big. We are not surprised to hear Mr. Freeman bring it to the surface, thanks to his canoe tour of the Hudson River.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. DRIFTING will surprise! By TerrThe title is Drifting: Two Weeks on the Hudson, but it isn't a book for nature lovers only. It is a book that discusses American history and the evolution of our current state of affairs affecting our lives as triggered by abandoned mills and towns he sees on the Hudson River canoe trip. Freeman writes NEO-CLASSIC LITERATURE. Don't buy this thinking you will read it in a day--Freeman didn't crank out a "day at the beach reader" like Patterson and his ilk. This author is Thoreau, Melville and Hawthorne. He questions to examine--not judge--the curious lives and environment around him like wise Socrates, and notes his own prejudices with humility. His humour is rich, and he is an author who sees BOTH sides of an issue without rancor and railings. If you are a philosopher, a nature lover (and Freeman knows his flora and fauna), an historian, a politician, an environmentalist, a teacher, an economist, an American, this is a book you want to read. If you believe the greatest American writers have already come and gone, you will be deeply gratified by Drifting. Mike Freeman is the new feather in our American literature cap.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A captivating journey!! By HerbAs I vicariously paddled down the Hudson River with Mike Freeman in his Old Town canoe from Henderson Lake in the Adirondacks to Manhattan, I was captivated by Mikes wide-ranging knowledge of history, poetry, music, religion, philosophy, flora, fauna, and the human condition. In Drifting, the rivers sights and sounds trigger the kind of sensitive observations and edgy commentary that only a true Renaissance man like Mike Freeman could make. I greatly enjoyed my trip down river with Mike and highly recommend the journey to anyone who has an urge to stretch their mind, ponder the meaning and possibilities of the human condition, and travel river-left and river-right.

This candid account of the author's two-week canoe trip down the Hudson River offers an introspective and humorous look at both the river and Recession-Era America. New to fatherhood and fresh from ten years in an Alaskan village, Mike Freeman sets out to relearn his country, and realizes it's in a far greater midlife crisis than he could ever be. With an eye on the Hudson's past, he addresses America's present anxieties--from race, gender, and marriage to energy, labor, and warfare--with empathy and honesty, acknowledging the difficulties surrounding each issue without succumbing to pessimism or ideology. From the river's headwaters in the Adirondacks, Freeman follows the Hudson south through America's first industrial ghost towns, where ruin begs for rebirth. Next is the Hudson Valley and the river's 153-mile estuary, with its once-teeming fisheries. Here, agriculture is redefining itself, while at West Point, officer candidates train for America's murky modern wars. The Hudson Highlands, too, are prominent, the place where Americans first wed God to nature, and where the mountains remain a potent place to mull that bond. From there it's on to Manhattan, with its skyline that symbolizes the world's financial might as well as its startling fragility. As controversial as it is comforting, Freeman's narrative makes us think in hard ways about America as the country itself drifts toward an uncertain future. But throughout, of course, is the magnificent Hudson, whose resilient beauty speaks well both to nature's toughness and America's greatest strength--the ability to redirect and change course when necessary.