

toast, now waterlogged, still in his pocket.

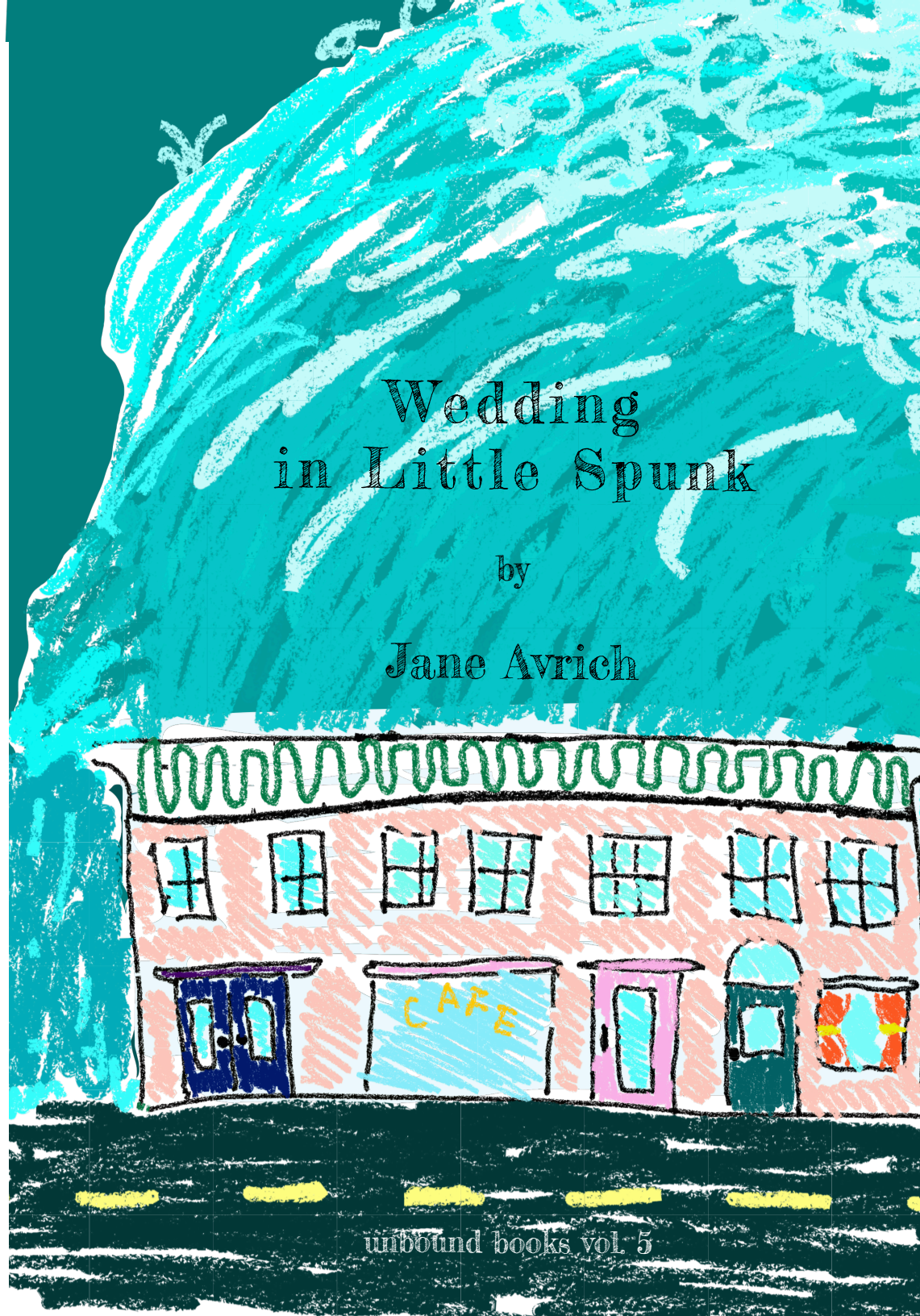
Jeffrey washed up in the driveway of Shafto's garage, picked himself up and started walking. It was close to dawn when he found Golda in the gazebo. Her wedding gown was drenched and green, but she no longer blushed about her appearance and ran to embrace him. As the sun rose over the town of Little Spunk, New Jersey, they sat together and watched the waters retreat, the flickering puddles on the asphalt and cracked sidewalks vanishing, the sodden grass turning springy again. In the distance, the shape of the boardwalk rose from the waves and the horizon became a peaceful steady line.

The End

Wedding in Little Spunk

by

Jane Avrich



All the wedding accoutrements were washed away as well. The

white velvet carpet that had been so carefully rolled along the boardwalk was plucked up and danced about like a ribbon. Tables

were similarly tossed as were the festive objects that covered them: centerpieces of white roses, purple stock and lilies of the valley, trays

of whitefish, sable and tongue (courtesy of the Sturgeon King), bottles of champagne, seltzer and Pepto Bismol. There were numerous

collisions. The mother of the groom's legs became elaborately entangled with the microphone cord. Jeffrey cried out when a pot

roast, now dressed with a flapping skein of seaweed, struck him in the nose. Musicians lost their instruments and beat on rutabagas. "Ride

the waves!" Morty cried out as best he could with sea water in his mouth, and the company of 242 tried to tip back on the surging jets of

water and lie supine, the way you would on a sedan. And so they were propelled onwards, gazing at the waltzing grey skies, entirely unsure

of where they would land—or if they would land at all.

At a little after midnight, the waves began to taper from their great height until the early hours of the next day when they spread

about the town like fingers and deposited the guests on their neighbors' front lawns, back yards, storefronts and alleys. Rabbi

Zimmerman landed in Mrs. Shelby's bougainvilleas, Jeffrey's mother pitched through the window of Pearl's Beauty Salon. Lying in the ski

ball alley of the amusement park, Morty discovered his scribbled

hen Hurricane Ida struck the tiny coastal town of

M

Little Spunk, New Jersey on May 9, 1939, Morty Brauer,

the Sturgeon King, was in the process of giving away his daughter, Golda, in marriage to Jeffrey Schwartz of Schwartz's Haberdashers,

LTD. As Morty promenaded Golda down the salty ribs of the Little Spunk boardwalk, the winds began to hoot and whirl, whipping off

the bride's spangled tulle veil and chasing it into the quickening sky as if it were another one of the clouds overhead that were clustering

together like crushed velvet and starting to leak. Golda smacked her bare face with her hands. "Jeffrey, don't look!" she squalled.

Bigger gusts surged, sweeping away Rabbi Zimmerman's tallis and buoying up women's skirts like umbrellas of candy pink muslin

and striped silk moiré. Some guests were knocked off their feet. On the beach, huge tumults of sand were whipped into amorphous

shapes resembling great squirrels, cicadas, long-tailed amphibians, lunging wrestlers.

The waves foamed and turned violet. They tossed fifty, a hundred feet in the air, rolling forwards at a breathless, spraying pace. They swallowed the beach with its sandshapes in one gulp, then

devoured the boardwalk, lifting Morty, Golda, Jeffrey, Rabbi Zimmerman and everyone else clear off their feet and into the

churning brine, surging so high that afterwards, people agreed that the edges of the waves grazed the clouds and made them leak afresh.