



## Aaron Belz

Aaron Belz's poetry has been published in American journals such as *Fence* and *Boston Review*, *Eleven Eleven* and *Zócalo Public Square*, and internationally in publications such as *Van Gogh's Ear*, *Jacket*, and *Tears in the Fence*. He has given live readings in numerous venues ranging from literary salons and bookstores to university classrooms, improv workshops, literary conferences and comedy festivals. He's released four full-length books of poems and two chapbooks. He lives in Savannah, Georgia.

### Books

#### ***Soft Launch* – Persea Books, 2019**

I would love to quote you a few lines from Aaron Belz's *Soft Launch*—how he rhymes 'Greenland' with 'what could have beenland,' for example, or rushes to the defense of Scott Fitzgerald—but that would give away the whole thing: the punchlines, the puns, the wry twists, the lemon twists, the twists of fate, and the fate of the known universe. It's all here, as a delicious set of inside jokes, like a Starbucks among the stars or a brat inside a bratwurst. The play within this play is what makes it playful. But also full. And delicious. Like a cup of tea that might scald you if you drink it too fast. Take little sips. Don't burn your lips. This poetry is hot, I'm warning you.

—D.A. Powell

Aaron Belz is the Comic of the Apocalypse. Were you expecting a Horseman? Get ready to be repeatedly disabused.

—Rae Armantrout

In the comic fourth book from Belz ... the poet acutely observes his fellow humans—especially millennials—and uses these observations to weave text-speak and startup jargon into rich moments that feel entirely human.

—*Publishers Weekly*

Belz writes by the philosophy that the longer we live with and in our language, the more we encounter its beautiful strangeness. We casually joke about how a word or phrase, said often enough, begins to lose its meaning; for Belz, repetition unlocks meaning. Take the layering of a single brand name, already nothing less than ubiquitous, in the poem “Starbucks”: “In heaven there’s a Starbucks / inside each Starbucks / so that you can be at Starbucks/ and on the way to Starbucks / at the same time, etc.”

—Aarik Danielsén, *The Curator*



## ***Glitter Bomb* – Persea Books, 2014**

The poems in *Glitter Bomb* pull no punches: irreverent, devastating, even nasty at times, they capture the present moment in all its absurdity and hyperreality. “Lampwise by altarlight” (*pace* Dylan Thomas), Aaron Belz keeps his eye on the object: often hilarious, he is also wise: here is a charming little poem called “Team,” telling us, with its tongue firmly in its cheek, that we do need others: “There’s no ‘I’ in team, / but there’s one in bitterness / and one in failure.” *Glitter Bomb* is full of such pleasures.

–Marjorie Perloff

Belz undoes the notion that humor must come second to big ideas.... These joke-poem hybrids challenge form by suggesting that the comedy *is* the poem, not just serving it. Even the more recognizably poetic pieces refuse to be taken too seriously.

–Andrew Ridker, *Boston Review*

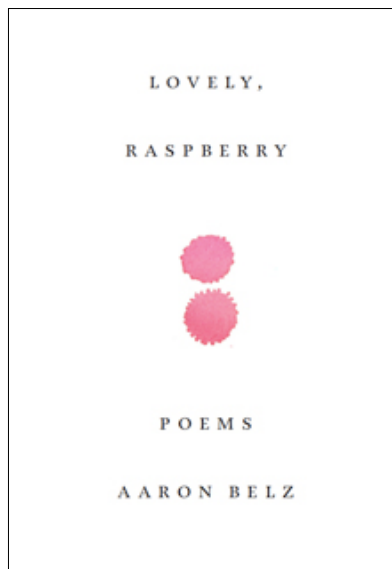


To say he isn’t “merely” a comic poet implies that there’s something wrong with being a comic poet. I don’t believe that, and Belz is one of the best comic poets we have. But even his silliest poems can break—with panache—into anxiety, heartbreak, longing, loss. “There’s no I in team,” he writes, “but there’s one in bitterness / and one in failure.”

–Michael Robbins, *Books & Culture*

The poetry of Aaron Belz is almost like a Mitch Hedberg or Demetri Martin joke: one-liners with a slapsticky residue, legitimized by a tongue-in-cheek yet undeniable logic. Hear his loving jabs at Laura Dern, Starbucks, the blue hotness of lady avatars, and palindromes as he justifies the presence of pop culture in poetry, proving that there’s beauty, or at least a lot of laughs, to be found in CGI movies and rampant unchecked capitalism — all those lovely American things.

–Heather Baysa, *The Village Voice*



## ***Lovely, Raspberry* – Persea Books, 2010**

Aaron Belz’s poetry reminds us that poetry should be bright, friendly, surprising, and totally committed to everything but itself. Reading him is like dreaming of a summer vacation and then taking it.

–John Ashbery

Aaron Belz’s enjoyable second collection flaunts its unfashionable accessibility. Belz embraces narrative, brevity, down-to-earth diction, and slapstick. His approach resembles the New York School’s lighter side, where Ashbery’s use of Popeye in a poem evokes pop art and O’Hara’s conversational tone disarms the reader to open him up for heavier material that follows.

–Jason Labbe, *Boston Review*

The ability to turn a phrase unexpectedly while refraining from overtly disjunctive syntax is one of the chief feats of this book. Enjambments roll out to a tempo of continual rerouting. In this poem, the close repetition of “thinking” indicates both the sincere interiority of relationships and a baroque joke; in fact, estrangement becomes the punch line. The ending is left ambiguous, because these conundrums—identity, compromise, suspicion, the lure of greener pastures—don’t have a neat resolution.

—Erika Jo Brown, *Jacket2*

The pieces in *Lovely, Raspberry* sound like dream narratives, chance operations, homophonic translations, jabberwockery, Beckett dialogue, logical syllogisms gone awry, or horrifying kids’ poetry. [...] This fanciful, rick-a-tick-tunk hullabaloo is just the antidote for capital P Poetry. There is indeed some subtle rhyme and meter in here, but just enough to make you do a double-take. Indeed, stanzas in the same poem sometimes don’t seem to have much connection to one another, beyond variations-on-a-theme – which is enjoyable, if you can take your reasonable hands off the verbal steering wheel for a bit. “Do not express yourself mildly: do it wildly.”

*Lovely, Raspberry* does it.

—Joseph Harrington, *Tarpaulin Sky*



### ***The Bird Hoverer* – BlazeVOX, 2007**

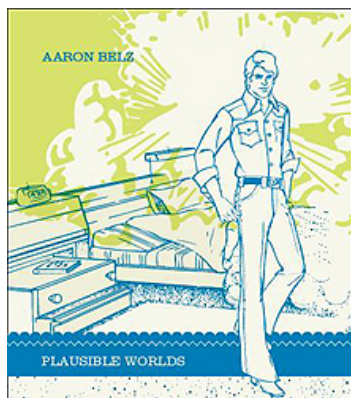
Aaron Belz is a gravely hilarious poet. The poems from *The Bird Hoverer* are part Discovery Channel, part History Channel, part E!—his ferocious intelligence, his love of glitz, and his wry take on relationships (both human and animal) are irresistible. Belz’s voice is bold, wise, inimitable.

—Denise Duhamel

The impressive, loopy poems in Aaron Belz’s first full-length collection are touched by a raw grace of mind and nimble phrasing. The poems stage deft quarrels with the same pop complacencies that inspire them, as in ‘Hidden Microphones,’ where the speaker’s enthusiasm about surveillance culture overwhelms him and he can’t help but exclaim, ‘I am all about hidden microphones.’ Readers will find themselves rattled,

delightfully, as Belz juggles the gods of the past with the gods of celebrity culture—always wired to an ethics of spectacle that resists becoming ‘all about hidden microphones.’

—Tony Trigilio, *Boston Review*



### ***Plausible Worlds* – Observable Books, 2005**

Belz writes a clean sort of post-NY school poem with a dry wit that belies his MA in creative writing (with Galway Kinnell as thesis counselor, no less) ... With Jonathan Mayhew & David Perry, one might even start to detect a kind of trend here—writers with strong NY or NY School aesthetics all across the southern half of Missouri. With a nod to Black Mountain alum Arthur Penn, I think of them collectively as the Missouri Linebreaks.

—Ron Silliman

## Interviews

*Writer's Digest* / Poetic Asides: <http://www.writersdigest.com/editor-blogs/poetic-asides/poetry-craft-tips/interview-with-poet-aaron-belz>

*The Believer*: <http://logger.believermag.com/post/62156263928/cartographer-of-word-galaxies>

*PIF Magazine*: <http://www.pifmagazine.com/2011/09/aaron-belz/>

*BBC World Service*: <https://soundcloud.com/aaron-belz/bbc-interview-august-13-2013>

## Public Appearances

Prairie Lights (Iowa City), Casa Romantica, The Sandbox/Biola, The Tomorrow Show, Comedy Meltdown, CB1 Gallery (Los Angeles); AWP 2010/Meadowlark Poetry Marathon (Denver); Word for Word Poetry/Bryant Park Reading Series, Cornelia Street Café, Frequency Poetry Series, MiPO Reading Series, Bowery Poetry Club, KGB Bar/Red Room, Knitting Factory, Halcyon, Ear Inn, Siberia/Loudmouth Collective, Just Buffalo, Behind the Egg, Zinc Talk/Reading, Unnameable Books, NYCAMS, Bryant Park Poetry Series (New York); Dogstar Books, The Row House (Lancaster, PA); Burlesque Poetry Hour (Washington DC); Bookslut, The Fixx, Danny's, Wheaton College, Myopic Books, Series A (Chicago); Seersucker Live (Savannah, GA); Solar Anus (Atlanta); Ball State University (Indiana); Left Bank Books, Subterranean Books, Duff's/River Styx, Underwood Reading Series, Borders Books, St. Louis Poetry Center, Regional Arts Commission, Way Out Club, Lucas Schoolhouse, Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, Comedy on Parade, The Vox Lounge, City Museum (St. Louis, MO); Covenant College (Lookout Mountain, GA); University of Missouri (Columbia); University of Missouri (Rolla); University of Illinois (Springfield); Woodland Pattern Book Center/Redletter Reading Series (Milwaukee); Innovailers & Outsliders, Experimental Writers from across the Country (AWP 2006, Austin, TX); Malone College (Canton, OH); Sarabande Books' Pink Door Series (Louisville, KY); Illinois State University (Normal); The College of New Jersey; New Orleans Comedy Arts Festival; Frequency North (Albany); Malaprop's Books (Asheville); The Festival of Faith & Writing (Grand Rapids); Flyleaf Books (Chapel Hill, NC), Purple Crow, The Burwell School (Hillsborough, NC); Dazzle Gradually/Friday Arts Project (Rock Hill, SC).

A live reading can be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KjK4NY-Y1Sg>

## Booking Information

To arrange an appearance, solicit poetry, or request an interview please contact:

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