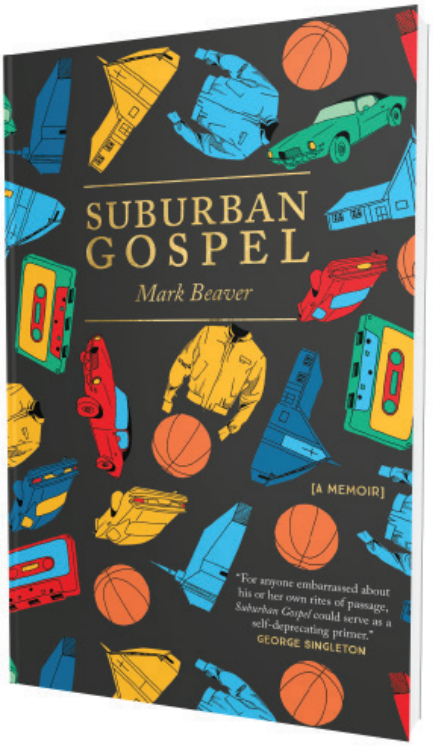
SUBURBAN GOSPEL

Mark Beaver



$16.95 Paperback, with French flaps
Also available as an eBook.
April 1, 2016
978-1-938235-19-1
5.5 x 8.5, 264 pages
Memoir/Literary
Distributed to the trade by John F. Blair
1-800-222-9796
www.blairpub.com

ABOUT HUB CITY PRESS

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"Part comic strip character Ziggy, part *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*, Mark Beaver's *Suburban Gospel* details the missteps and close-calls of that relentless and necessary Era of Adolescence. Funny, and honest, and clear-sighted. Between the lines, Beaver attests that we're all in this weird life together."

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"You need not be Bible Belt Southern, first generation suburbanite, or male to appreciate Mark Beaver's terrific memoir of growing up all of the above in and around 1980s Atlanta, because Beaver, portraying the life he did not choose, brings so much of both to his story that you're bound to reap the leftovers."

—MICHAEL PARKER, author of *All I Have In This World*

WHEN THE DEACONS AT MARK BEAVER'S Bible Belt church cue up an evangelical horror flick aimed at dramatizing Hell, he figures he'd better get right with God, and soon. Convinced he could die at age seven and spend eternity roasting on a spit in the fiery furnace of Hades, he promptly gets Saved. But once the '80s and his adolescence hit, the Straight and Narrow becomes a tight squeeze.

Suburban Gospel offers more than a look inside the Southern Baptist religion circa Jerry Falwell and the Moral Majority—it's a tale of faith *and* flesh. Beaver invites us into a world filled with Daisy Duke fantasies and Prince posters, Nerf Hoops and Atari joysticks, raggedy Camaros and the neon light of strip malls. As much about the adolescent heart as the evangelical mind, the story explores similar emotional terrain as coming-of-age classics like Tobias Wolff's *This Boy's Life* and Mary Karr's *Cherry*. *Suburban Gospel* is a tale of growing up Baptist, all right—but also of just growing up.

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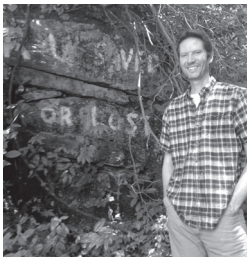

MARK BEAVER's prose has appeared in numerous journals and magazines, including *Gulf Coast, Crazyhorse, North American Review, Ninth Letter, Tampa Review, storySouth, Louisville Review, Third Coast, Fugue, Southeast Review*, and elsewhere. He's a graduate of UNC-Greensboro's MFA program and lives with his wife and daughters in his native Atlanta.

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