

*Deadbeat* / Jay Baron Nicorvo

**PRESS RELEASE:** Four Way Books announces the publication of *Deadbeat*, the debut collection of poetry by Jay Baron Nicorvo. Publicity measures include readings, conference & festival appearances, and radio appearances. For information, e-mail [publicity@fourwaybooks.com](mailto:publicity@fourwaybooks.com)

“It seems possible that Jay Baron Nicorvo has ingested all the darkness of this life and now breathes fire.”  
—**Nick Flynn**

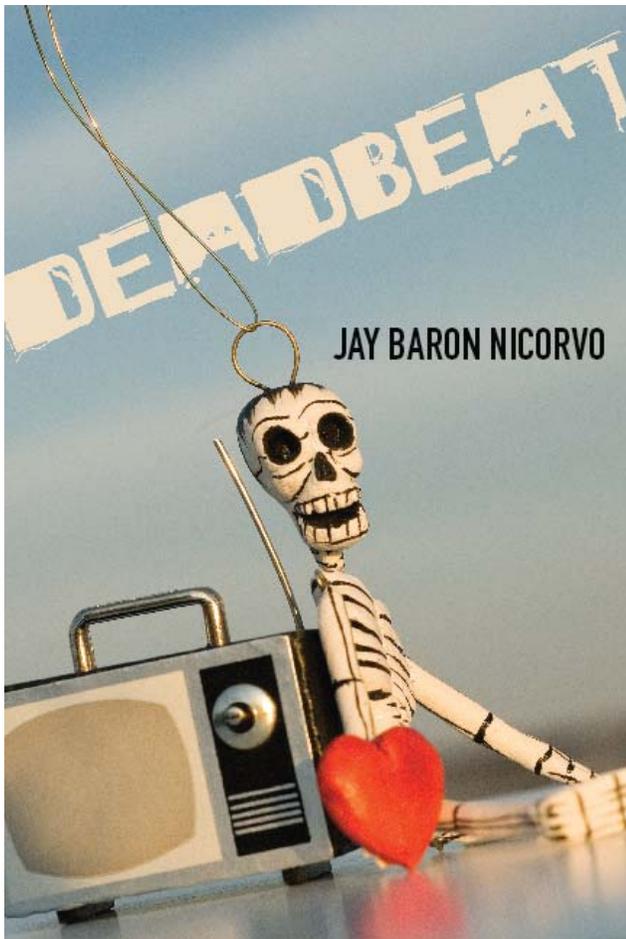
“Jay Baron Nicorvo’s marvelous debut is something of a contemporary epic shot through with paradoxical levity and gravity... These poems explore what it is to be loving and loveless and ultimately give us an irreducible view of our humanity. *Deadbeat* is a book of joy, melancholy and abiding tenderness.”  
—**Terrance Hayes**

Nicorvo’s coy and coruscating narrator stands shoulder to shoulder with Ed Dorn’s *Gunslinger* and Marvin Bell’s *Dead Man*, to say nothing of Mr. Bones and John Berryman. With generous helpings of Hopkins, Cummings and Creeley too, these poems provide a literary feast with intelligence and panache to spare.  
—**Campbell McGrath**

Jay Baron Nicorvo’s debut collection revolves around a central character, called *Deadbeat*—descendant of John Berryman’s *Mr. Bones*, Marvin Bell’s *Dead Man* and Ted Hughes’s *Crow*, to name an irrepressible few. Nicorvo’s compassionate yet relentless portrait—of *Deadbeat*, an absent father and husband, and the family that goes on without him—weaves together a domestic narrative in which we witness *Deadbeat* muddle through courtship, marriage, estrangement, divorce, and, of course, fatherhood.

The book opens at a child support hearing—“Take a good look at your future,” the mother tells the young boy—and the poems that follow careen back and forth in time chronicling a downtrodden life, from the courtroom to the budding romance between *Deadbeat* and his bride to *Deadbeat*’s grown son and his own child. “What’s all this about love / when need strikes first fires?” we are asked, while layer upon complex layer is added to what we think we know about *Deadbeat*. Calling upon other well-known figures as in-absentia fathers—far-flung Odysseus, President Obama’s father, and even God in the poem “*Deadbeat on High*”—Nicorvo allows us to glimpse, with a surprising tenderness, the humanness of this man who “stripped the screw holding heaven together” and “mistook the window / for the world.” An effigy for America and our culture of recession, *Deadbeat* is brought to life with honesty, sympathy and love in all of its complications.

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## Child Support Hearing

Deadbeat enters the courtroom without a toupée, shirt unbuttoned to his navel, a gold V dangling the Patron Saint of Audited Tax Evaders.

Son of Deadbeat wants to know why his brothers aren't here. His mother, a bankrupt, answers, *What brothers*. When they're all called

to rise, she touches his ear and tells him, *Take a good look at your future*, and what he sees, years later, isn't presidential: the veteran asleep on the subway, the grave

oak that has always been there, an unstarred urban night like a leather hood drawn over his face by an older man,

the last Hadrian, who swears, *You're going to love this*.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

JAY BARON NICORVO's poetry, fiction, nonfiction and criticism have appeared in *The Literary Review*, *Guernica*, *The Iowa Review* and *The Believer*. He's served on editorial staffs at *Ploughshares* and at *PEN America*, the literary magazine of the PEN American Center, and worked for the Council of Literary Magazines and Presses [clmp]. He teaches at Western Michigan University, where he's faculty advisor to *Third Coast*, and he lives on an old farm outside Battle Creek with his wife, Thisbe Nissen, their rambunctious son and a dozen vulnerable chickens.

