

## NON-FICTION Fiona Capp

## PICK OF THE WEEK

## THE SWEETEST THING: A BOXER'S MEMOIR

Mischa Merz

Seven Stories Press, \$29.95



IN HER famous 1987 essay on boxing, Joyce Carol Oates writes that boxing is a purely masculine activity and that women boxers are “monstrous”. Talented a writer as Oates is, she is also a product of her time — and times have changed.

In the past two decades, women’s boxing has come of age. At 45, Australian journalist and boxer Mischa Merz had given up on any ambitions for her boxing career. Emotionally and physically wrung out

after her mother’s death, she decided to visit Gleason’s, the iconic boxing gym in New York, to taste some sporting history. What she found there marked her reawakening and the realisation that boxing can be a “path to self-knowledge”; that women can fight with as much skill and panache as men. Her story is alive with the charismatic, talented and intelligent women who populate this world. Although I’ve always been repelled by boxing, I was captivated by Merz’s insider’s account of the ringside drama, the personalities and the sport’s quixotic allure.

## READING MY FATHER

Alexandra Styron

Scribner, \$35