Men on the mat

TIM KENNEDY HANNA

Killing Richard Dawson
By Robin Baker
Pantera Press, 319pp, $24.95

Rocks in the Belly
By Jon Bauer
Scribe, 289pp, $32.95

The Norwegian's Song
By Joel Deane
Hunter Publishers, 229pp, $32.95

Glissando: A Melodrama
By David Marsgrave
Sleepers Publishing, 319pp, $27.95

UDGING by the narrators of these debut novels, the Australian male’s losing battle against emotions is in full cry. Archdeacon in David Marsgrave’s Glissando, says his story is a meditation on “when I lost myself in that first great, passionate adventure gilt-edged with a darkness of the heart ever since.” As a boy he’s abandoned, along with his half-brother Reggie, and raised by the theatrical Madame Octave. “I can still smell the dusty sunlight of those days,” he recalls in a rare moment of warmth. Madame Octave leads the boys to Fliss, a granite farmstead built by their migrant grandfathe...