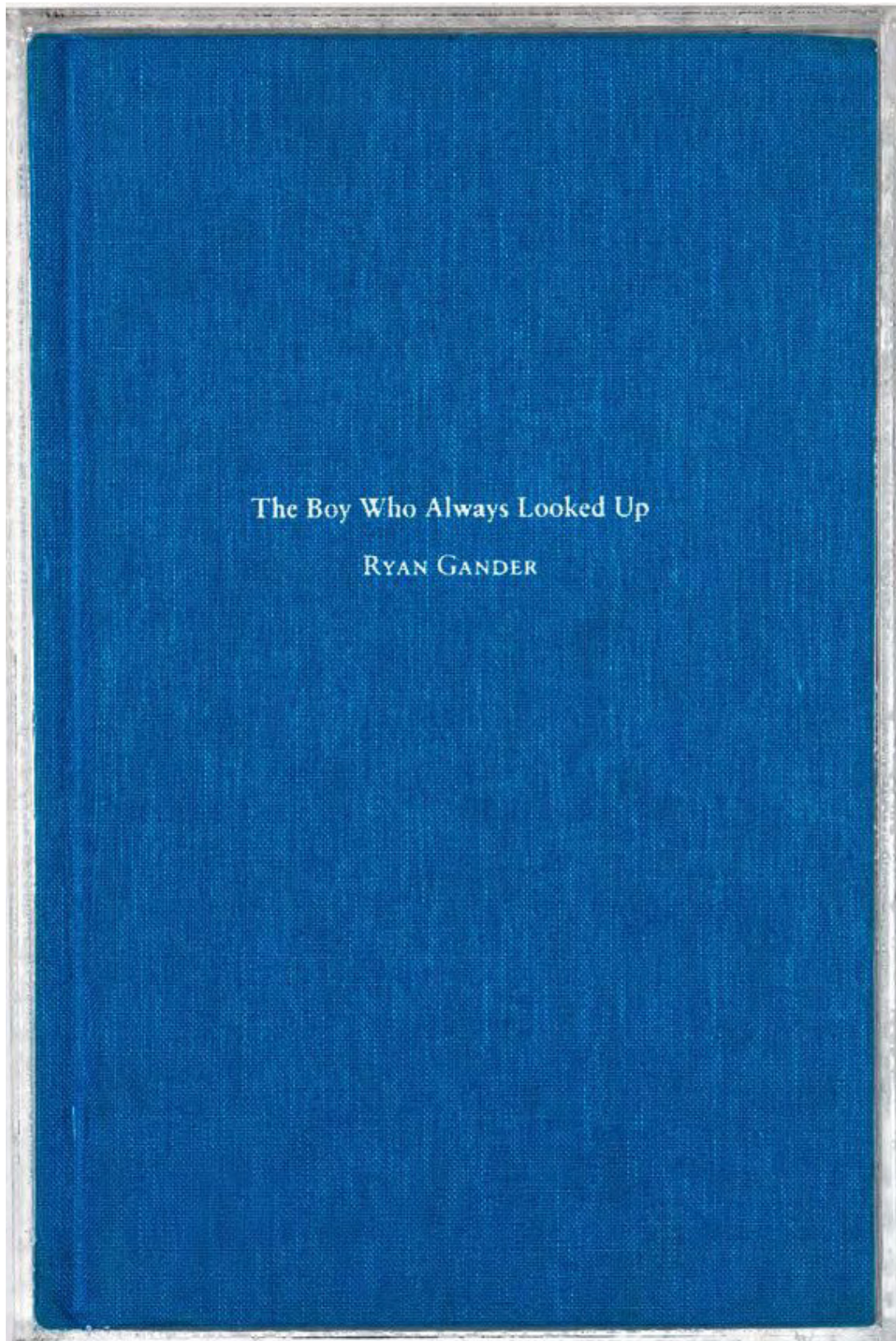


37 - THE BOY WHO ALWAYS LOOKED UP



## 37-THE BOY WHO ALWAYS LOOKED UP

They both sat there on the roof looking out in silence. It wasn't an uncomfortable silence, they were just quiet and thoughtful, enjoying the view over London. And just then, when Tom least expected it, Erno asked a question Tom had known he would ask one day. A question that nobody had ever asked him before and one that he knew would be difficult to answer.

"Why do you look up, Tom?" he asked, pushing his small round spectacles back up his nose. Tom's heart sank, and there was a long silence before either of them spoke again. But this wasn't a silence like before. This time it was a silence waiting to be broken. Tom felt like crying. He wanted to give an answer, but he didn't know what to say. Erno sat and waited patiently. When he finally did speak, Tom's words came out in a funny squeaky voice and he had to blink his eyes a few times to stop the tears falling out.

"I think it's because it seems better up here than down there," he said, wiping his nose on the sleeve of his jumper. "Because it's empty up here in the sky and when I look up I feel I can do anything. Like anything's possible." Erno smiled.

"Now, don't be sad Tom," he said. "Do you know what grown-ups call that?"

"No" said Tom, shaking his head wildly and wiping the tears from his cheeks which were now streaming from his eyes.

"Aspiration," he replied.

– "The Boy Who Always Looked Up," Ryan Gander, Dot Dot Dot #7/8, 2003/4

Ryan Gander,  
The boy always looked up, 2002,  
hardback, 21 x 14 cm