

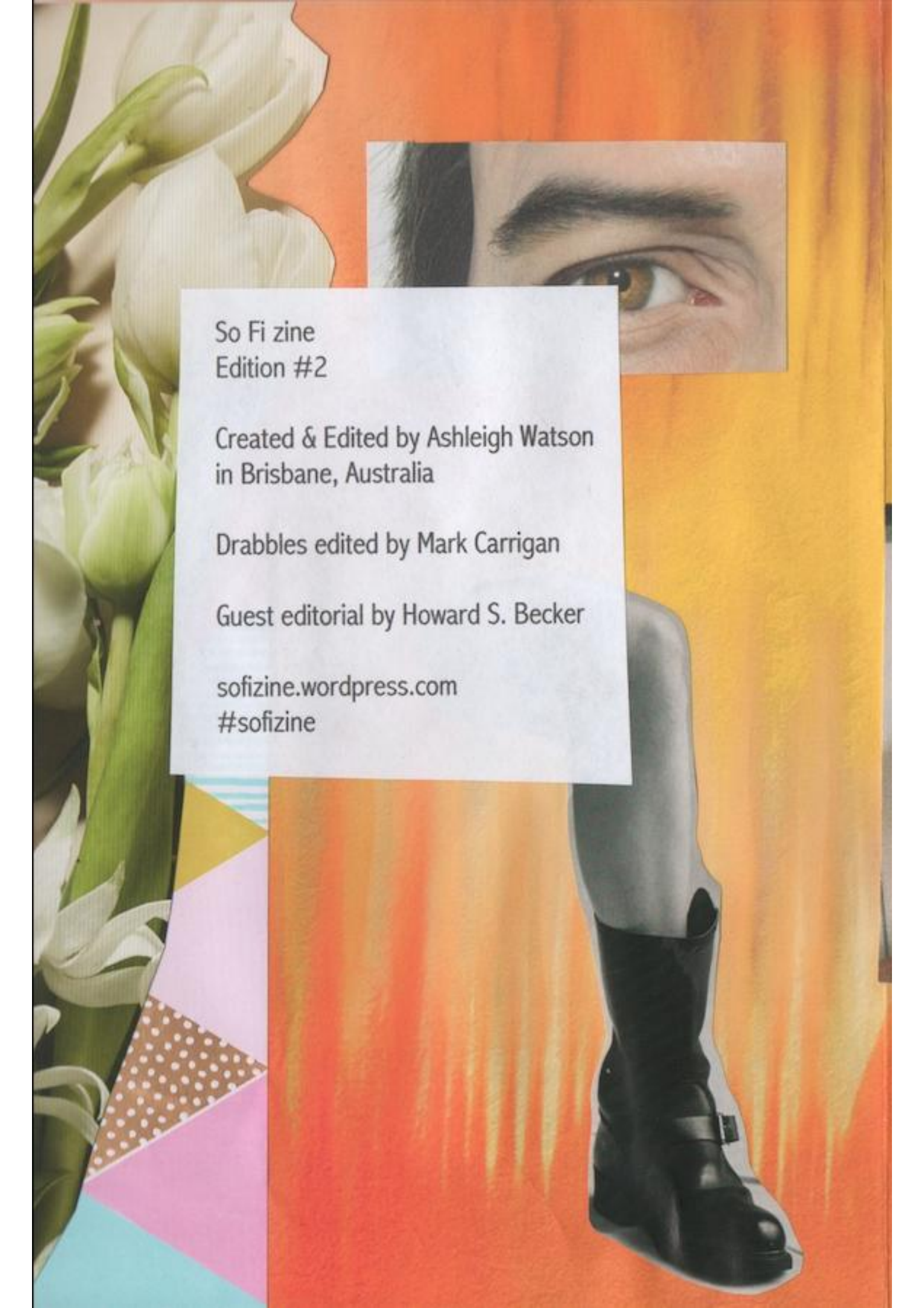


a sociological fiction zine

Edition #2

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So Fi zine  
Edition #2

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Being Ralphie Wiggum  
Rumi Ando



Groundskeeper Willie: *You call that a scar?*

*This is a scar!*

Nelson Muntz: *That's a bellybutton.*

*Everybody's got one.*

Willie [sad]: *I thought I was special.*

— The Simpsons [s22e10] Holidays of Future Passed

*[requirement for being a sociologist is] never to believe readily in the stupidity, in the absolute viciousness of man in the past, nor in his present perversity, and never to despair of his future.*

— Gabriel Tarde

*Always remember that you are absolutely unique.*

*Just like everyone else.*

— Margaret Mead

Poor Ralphie Wiggum is not stupid. He is just a kid, he's still in elementary school. Perhaps his academic coefficient is fairly low. But what draws attention towards him is that he's smiling most of the time, he receives his parent's love, and he is apparently naïve. He's polite and attentive to everyone, even to his principal's boss and says hello, even if erring the name or job title: "*Hi SuperNintendo Chalmers!*" His letter of presentation is introducing a crayon, or whatever he finds nearby, into his nose and say *I am special*.

To argue that one is a unique snow flake in the universe you need to have very little (or much) imagination, or have an extremely high opinion of yourself, almost with no consciousness of the external world. How could we know if we are all special, or only some? Or nobody? But, in relation to what? We amount to so little in the grand count of the stars. An American band knows this and carries a flag on that idea: *Alien Ant Farm*.

In the end, mocking the ingenuity of little Ralphie is a fierce irony. What actually awakens empathy towards him is that we all have a bit of that: an empty, simple gaze, with no further explanation. What do we know about cosmos, of the meaning of existence and how to live a joyful life? At least this last point is something that he carries on very well, and that we would well do to emulate.