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To whom it may concern,

Why art? Why literature? Why podcasts? ...and why do we have emotions?

Emotions are calls to action. The feeling of hunger pushes us to seek food and nourish our bodies. Fear helps us avoid dangers. We feel love in order to reproduce and survive as a species. And we feel the need to connect to and be accepted by others in order to be protected and nurtured by them. Emotions may seem dry when seen through the dispassionate scientific lens of pure biological needs but they are in fact the spice of life.

But how do we make sense of them? Why do we feel what we feel at a given time or in a given situation? And how many years of life are needed to make sense of them? Do we ever fully reach emotional maturity? This is where art and literature come in. We only have one life and a limited number of years to experience all that an emotion filled life has to offer. Literature connects us to the experiences of others and to the emotions they stir in us. We grow through the experiences of literary characters almost as much as we do from our own.

Young children are just getting acquainted with their own thoughts and emotions. They are in their own minds. But by adolescence we develop a theory of mind – the understanding that others have their own distinct thoughts. This is the challenge of adolescence. We become acutely aware that others have thoughts and judgements about us. The need to be accepted, when one has yet to develop self-confidence, thus becomes the biggest challenge for adolescents. *I'm such a freakin' loser! Will I ever be loved? Am I normal? When will people realise I'm just an impostor?*

This is why hearing about someone else's emotional struggles helps us mature. We feel less alone, less disconnected. Literature can convey other people's inner worlds and make them a part of our own.

Literature and art come in many forms and one of the most powerful ones for today's youth are podcasts. Very little is consumed unless it comes through a small hand-held device. Podcasts bring stories directly into their worlds. By hearing a story from another

person's mind an adolescent will begin to feel less isolated. This is why we ask for your support for this important project.

The role of all art is to stir emotions. Emotions move us, motivate us, make us care. It is why we create it, consume it, teach it. And why we encourage you to fund it.

On behalf of Blue Met's Mental Health and Literature project, thank you in advance for your support,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Camillo Zacchia". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "C" and a long, sweeping underline.

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