



POLAROID CORPORATION

CAMBRIDGE 39, MASSACHUSETTS

March 7, 1959

Dear Mrs. Dorr,

It has been ages since I wrote you
and a long and weary February.

I must tell you that City on a Hill
rests unfinished - finished in so far as
I can go but unbacked by Mr. Land for
publication now - and I was, as this
shelving transpired, sunk into depression
and unavoidably disillusioned. I had
been so eager to see this happen and upon
meeting Mr. Blumenthal and Mr. Convent
in New York I was fairly delirious with
excitement about the realization of
the book - which I had not thought of
while I was doing the pictures themselves.
I now worry more about letting down
others like Mr. Blumenthal and - you - who
have given me help of such a special and
unrepayable kind - I feel especially
thwarted that I cannot present you
with such a book as we have visualized
together. It would have meant more than

The book itself I think. I have learned through this process that industry and its outward problems of money and timing cannot justify the final yes. I had thought Mr. Land would, in his constant approval as I went along, be enough behind the book to see it through, but he has not given me the kind of support necessary. He is too encircled by the responsibility of justifying a tiny flower in the mass of "larger" more immediate ones. I will not express to you the disillusion I have experienced — causing my lack of correspondance in the last month — I barely spoke some days.. it seemed so impossible that I could not complete my book — a strangled feeling. I am sure that Mr. Land cannot understand



POLAROID CORPORATION

CAMBRIDGE 39, MASSACHUSETTS

2.

The amount of personal effort that went into this book. I don't think he sees me as very different from others taking pictures in the lab — I cannot explain how hard I've worked because, somehow you can't explain to a boss what ^{he doesn't} ~~they don't~~ seem to see in your work. Scientific research in this lab is such a fast and plunging kind that I think the thing simplicity and quiet of the book doesn't compare. I don't think it can compare, either, but its place is valid. In a place where everything has to be of immediate value to the organization, my work has trouble even existing — so I think the actual object was even more difficult to fit in than I am! I know, also, that my personal involve-

ment in this work produced the good in the pictures. I care about them and the book. But that caring you know about. It touches you and together, without speaking of it, we understand. But such personal absorption doesn't fit here... Mr. Land has girls work intelligently, involved directly with his work and thus, under his voice, interpreting and dedicating - but not doing work that will exist separately, alone ~~on~~ its own merit.

This may sound bitter. I will tell you that I have been hurt and felt thwarted at a very personal level - but I am no longer so because all the time I know that what matters is not the book - but its making - its experience which has enriched



POLAROID CORPORATION

CAMBRIDGE 39, MASSACHUSETTS

3.

my life beyond measure. to Begin —
I met and found you — the best beginning
of my life and worth a Thousand books —
Through you I worked as myself and I
know now what I am — which I did
not know before; because of you I made
The book. I found the courage. I
loved the work I have done, and I know
what loving means. As results of this
work I have met and known Those men
in New York with whom I would have
printed The book. I know They are there —
and I have the chance to someday find
work through Them again —

Besides these friendships that
have opened worlds to me ^{There} are those
encounters on Beacon Hill that have
given pleasure in friends as well as
pictures. I must tell you particularly
about Mr. Walter Whitehill who directs

The Athenaeum and who is most interested in the book. His last effort is as yet unanswered by Mr. Land but may leave room for possibility. The Athenaeum will handle publication of the book if Mr. Land is interested in giving a gift to the Athenaeum tax free — thus, the company would not have to justify the publishing of a book in the structure of the company.

In many ways I also find myself eager to leave Boston and, of course, to marry Mitch. The winter has been weary for us both and the days march by announced as spring approaches — I don't seem to find myself alive in the working part of my life. My thoughts are tired of duality. I think that the depth



POLAROID CORPORATION

CAMBRIDGE 39, MASSACHUSETTS

4.

of my concern about the little book would not have been so possible, if I were not already nervous and excitable and eager to finish my work before my marriage. I have never experienced the feelings, even about the tiniest of mundane affairs, that I have this winter and I know that much of the difficulty is bound up in the strain of being happy in the new warmth of love and bleak without it... The spring promises a new warmth of closer anticipation and a oneness of thoughts that I have great need of now. These conflicts are those inexpressible to anyone but those who understand: Frederick and you. It is because I know

That you understand even more than
I do, that I tell you.

I want to take more pictures.
I would like to make another book
someday, one of my own. I have
learned not to work in a world of
business without written promises.
So I want to work on my own. It would
be good sometime to talk with you
about the world of Photography that
I really only touch on the fringes. I'd
love to watch you in the darkroom -
It is a part of this exciting medium
that I don't experience and want
to understand. There's so much to
learn!

Until I journey with all my
belongings to New Jersey on March 20,
I am helping employees in Polaroid



POLAROID CORPORATION

CAMBRIDGE 39, MASSACHUSETTS

5.

with Their pictures hoping That in
a small way I may open Their eyes
to Photography and The beauty
around Them. This gives me some
pleasure. in as much as I can do
something before I must leave. In
a way it may make a path for The
approach of City on a Hill toward
photography — which is as yet
anathema to The Sales Department,
who want books to say "How to..."

I am going to be living at
home 50 So. Main St.
Cranbury, N.J.

after The 20th and will make
only a few trips directly to Boston
in regard to my work. Polaroid

has asked me to do some work,
just working with the camera,
which I'll be happy to do, and
I think it may become more as
time draws closer to leaving. Since
I have done the book I know so
much more than before and am eager
to learn and do more!

Ah and my favorite thought:
in June we will be coming to the
^{May} lovely calm of your meadow and will
have this time behind us and the
whole future opening wide. It is with
joy that I look to May and a silent
word of thanks to you that I greet
that joy.



POLAROID CORPORATION

CAMBRIDGE 39, MASSACHUSETTS

6.

Enclosed are a few little Things some of which may interest you - others not so much - I thought that you might need a new pen - point because I know that they wear down from time to time. I still have your graflex camera and am finding great difficulty in obtaining a grafloc back that adapts the 4x5 "adapter" for 4x5 film packs. Apparently the part is no longer made - I will persist and let you know. Our machine men cannot attack jobs that haven't got parts that are already built - but could adapt the camera for Polaroid film if I can find this old back." So be it.

I will write again but in the mean-while I send warmest of greetings to

Mr. Dorr. Do Tell him That I have spoken
with Mr. Land about highway safety
and the Dorr foundation but do not
know what has transpired.

I send you continuous gratitude -
and an open invitation to be of any
service to you that may be needed -
For me, it is a joy to know you are There.
and I think of you, of your books and
of The Villa Serena often -

Love, Margaretta