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September 22, 1965

Mrs. Nell Dorr
Nettleton Hollow Road
Washington, Connecticut

Dear Mrs. Dorr:

Now that we have studied your book once again and thought about our visit with you, we want to write this brief note to tell you how much we enjoyed last Sunday morning.

It was altogether a delightful visit, and doubly productive.

I am planning to go to New York City tomorrow and will show the photographs in hopes that one will be approved. This, of course, is in other hands than mine, but I will let you know when the reaction becomes specific, if it ever does. At that time, all the pictures will, of course, be safely returned to you.

More important, however, were the personal elements of our visit which are so happily reflected in "Mother and Child." I have had so many heartbreaks in my effort to publish pictorial books through the years, that I celebrate the discovery of your book doubly. I have found it very hard to convince publishers about the type of pictorial book that interests me most. As a matter of fact, they frequently do not have the vaguest notion of what I am trying to say. My feeling about picture books is that they actually constitute a new or different art form. If a pictorial book is viewed as a word book, naturally it fails to measure up; and if a pictorial book of the type I like is viewed as a book of illustrations, naturally it fails to measure up.

What I have been championing through the years have been pictorial books which are a complete integration of words and pictures so that they cannot be separated or carelessly defined as something they are not. This of course, as you well know, is the hardest type of pictorial book to handle; and actually does not seem to enter the thinking of most publishers. I guess they are accustomed to having some-

body write a book and find some other person to put pictures to it. Naturally there is no intermingling of aim or of thought, and the books generally show it.

Then too I have discovered that books that are properly integrated between words and pictures sometimes do not fall into any convenient or usual pattern. They may have too few words or they may not seem to be books at all. This tends to worry publishers since they are actually weighing the manuscript as against the usual books. They fear them; worry about their costs; fail to realize that such books could command the highest number of readers if properly presented; etc.

I remember taking my Einstein book years ago around to a number of publishers, before I had very many books published at all. It was rejected. After it finally found a publisher and was moderately successful, I returned to the previous publishers who had rejected the Einstein book. This time I had a new idea. Again they were skeptical. Having a short memory, one of them asked me whether I didn't have another idea like the Einstein book.

But all of this I am sure you are well aware of. It would be hardly possible to open the "Mother and Child" without realizing that you know all of this and more. This is, indeed, a work of art, and we are proudly leaving on our table for all who visit us to see it.

I note in the opening pages some reference to a "Dorr Foundation." I have never heard of this Foundation before. Does it publish books? I am always on the alert for avenues that can be approached because the regular publisher is so boxed in by his preconceptions of what books should be.

As I think I mentioned to you, I actually pursue two different avenues of work in my writing. I have done some ten or twelve books, approximately half of them combinations of words and pictures. On the other hand I do work for corporations and advertising agencies in the field of promotional and advertising writing.

When a family is putting three children through college it is necessary to do more than write books which sell only passably well.

I think you would be interested to know that last December I suffered a mild heart attack, and while in the hospital worked on a venture which I have had in mind for some years. At that time I prepared my Walt Whitman manuscript which I mentioned to you. When I left the hospital I clutched my Whitman manuscript in my hands, not intending it to be thrown away mistakenly by some doctor or nurse. I thought you would be interested in knowing this because our conversation lead me to believe that you had a somewhat similar experience.

Following my illness I decided I would no longer seek to confront publishers in person since I find this a most frustrating and exasperating experience. I have grown tired trying to explain to publishers that my books are not merely word books with illustrations, but actually in a sense a new art form which has a maximum of public interest, I believe. By the time one gets finished trying to convince a publisher of one argument, he moves on to another why such books would not sell. Therefore I engaged a literary agent which now handles most of my writing. The Whitman manuscript is in his hands and I would like to think that he will find it a publisher.

I am sure you agree with me that in today's world of television and visual emphasis, the use of pictorial media in books is doubly important for any subject that seeks to reach out to large numbers of people. I particularly feel that there is a great need for stressing the common bond of humanity which extends around the world and to people everywhere of all kinds, shapes and sizes. I think that there are very few mediums of expression that are as permanent and as moving as a book of the type you do and which interests me as well. <u>The Family of Man</u> was, of course, such a book. So is "Mother and Child." I like to think that my "Einstein" also makes a contribution in this direction.

I am now at work on a new venture which is not primarily pictorial but which I think also is important from the point of view of making people see the bonds of identity which connect people of all kinds. I am doing research in the Reconstruction Era of the South; with a special emphasis on a new point of view. It is a most absorbing research and I only wish I did not have my New York chores to interfere with my creative research. But this unfortunately is the way things are.

At any event, this long, rambling letter is by way of indicating my thanks to you for the friendly visit. While the children did not say very much, they also were glad that we brought them along and were won over, as children generally are, more by intangibles than anything else. We have an older daughter who is a Junior at the University of Pennsylvania, planning to specialize in city planning. Next year, we will have two children in college simultaneously which is a glorious feat, I suppose.

I am attaching to this letter a few odds and ends which may interest you concerning some of the work I have done and am doing.

Some time in the period ahead perhaps we might have another opportunity of meeting with you and chatting about subjects in which we share a common interest.

In the meantime many thanks.

Cordially,

Bill Cahn

William Cahn
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