

Exodus

MARY ANN MALOTT

The mid-afternoon sun gleamed against the double French doors at the side of the bungalow. The bright sunlight touched the dulling blue rug in rectangular slits through the venetian shades and changed it for a moment into a sea-blue hue. A gangly pup sprawled as close to the sun as possible, her ears a golden mass of curls dragging the floor and her mitten-sized paws tucked around her. The only movement was a stub of a tail twitching back and forth. In one sudden motion, she bounded at the doorknob and made the metal shades come with a deep clang against the wood of the door. "Mary Ann, your dog wants out," a voice called from the basement. The dog hunched on her long hind-legs and knitted her droopy forehead into the yellow wrinkles. She finally spoke with a hushed "wuff," which was answered with "Mary Ann!" from the basement. I came from the front room and looked at my pup squatting there.

"Well, where's your harness?" I asked impatiently, but the only answer was another hop at the door which sent the metal

shades crashing. "Mother, where's her leash?"

"What?"

"Where is her leash?"

"Wait a minute. I'm coming up. Now what did you say?"

"I asked you where her harness is."

"Well, I haven't seen it, but hurry! — for look what she's done to the door, and I just painted it before we got her. Haven't you found it yet?" The little dog waited a few minutes watching the figures scurry around the room; then she burst out with a loud "woof" to bring the attention back to her. The silver-studded leash was found under a chair and was hooked around the pup's neck. She added a deep black scar to the white outer door in her frenzy to get out. I followed the taut leather rope, leaving my mother standing in the doorway, shaking her head slowly. A second later she called after us, "Mary Ann, for heaven's sake keep her out of the mud and remember the rag is here to wipe her feet." Then she added to herself, "Just look at that door," and once more directed me, "Keep that dog out of the mud!"