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## For Those Visiting the Desert for the First Time

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# For Those Visiting the Desert for the First Time

by Leo Luke Marcello

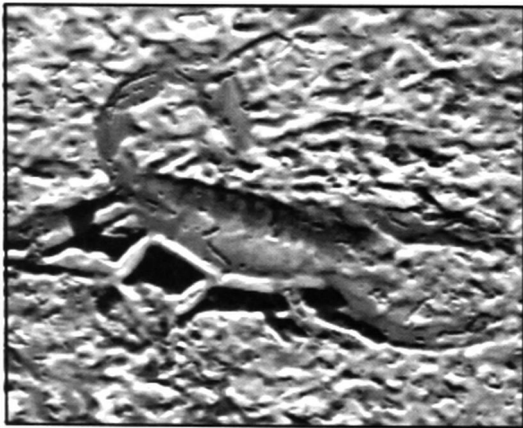
Walk carefully among the cacti.  
They may look like a Disney set,  
but they will lean into your flesh  
if you let them.

Watch out for rubber bands.  
They may snap out of shape  
and sting you with their venom.

If you are scorpion-stung or cacti-attacked,  
go at once to the Salvadorean kitchen staff.  
They will cleanse your wound  
and pack the bite with ice.

They understand. They can tell  
stories of their torture  
in another country, though they  
do not speak of such things.

Before and after dinner, you can  
hear their bright voices in the kitchen,  
rising like flutes and cymbals  
through the din of  
pots and pans.



*Photo (detail) by Joel Kendall*