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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.

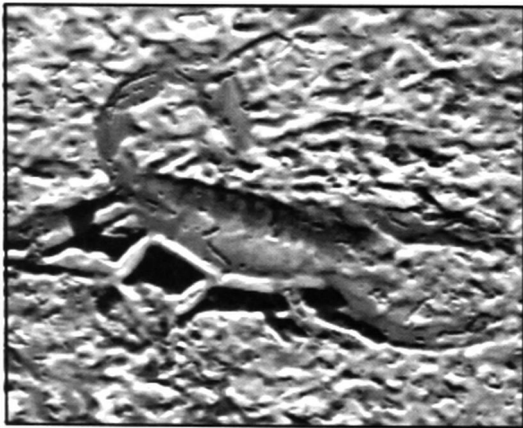


Photo (detail) by Joel Kendall