Little San Ramon

It sounded so good after all the rigorous training in Puerto Rico and Camp Radley. It was good to finally be in country. I spent my first night in a cheap hotel provided by the Peace Corps. During the night a furry thing landed on my bed. I grabbed it in my hands and threw it across the room…Some other woman in the crowded room yelled. We all woke up. I think it was a mouse. What a gross beginning. San Salvador gave me the creeps for months after that.

After a few days, I left for little San Ramon where I was assigned. San Ramon was amazing and beautiful. I never felt so blessed as I did the day I walked into that place. I had no place to stay so this lovely lady, Josafina Funes de Perez, opened her house to me. I was given the "banana room" my first night there. It was totally awful. On one wall there was this scorpion and on another was a tarantula. I didn't know what to do, I tried to scream but no words came out of my mouth at first…finally I made myself known that I needed help. I was in the middle of two things I feared most-- a scorpion and a tarantula. As it worked out, Josafina came in and smacked them both with her shoe, a small plastic shoe that she wore.

The next day, I was given a larger room and felt safer. In that room I came to name the bat, Matilda, I trapped the rats(big as small cats), and I read with my one light over me, book high, so I could watch my feet for the scorpions, and I smacked them with my shower shoes, just like she did. It's funny, I adjusted after that first night in little San Ramon. I think it was because I never felt more at home in a place in my entire life. To this day, it is my heaven on earth. Nothing seemed to get me down there, it was my refuge in the midst of world and local chaos: death of other Peace Corps volunteers, thrown and wounded badly from a horse, lots of parasites, war with Honduras, deaths of Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Viet Nam War. Nothing, because in Little San Ramon I experienced fully life, pure and simple. The world went on outside of San Ramon, but while I was in that little dusty town of a few hundred adults and children, they were all that mattered. I had the energy of a 22 year old woman with a purpose that gave me more energy…