

were it not for — michael ashkin

were it not for the endless expanse
were it not for the distance between here and there
were it not for the closed horizons
were it not for the unmarked border
were it not for the lack of a map
were it not for the oncoming night
were it not for the shortness of breath
were it not for the lack of cover
were it not for the vultures above
were it not for the bandits
were it not for the smugglers
were it not for the stories
were it not for the friend who returned
were it not for the friend who failed to return
were it not for the promise of no better
were it not for the lack of water
were it not for the still unhealed wounds
were it not for the price of trespassing
were it not for the lack of faith
were it not for the lack of cash
were it not for the lack of a plan
were it not for the death of the dream
were it not for the war
were it not for the other war
were it not for the escapist delusion
were it not for the uncertain distance
were it not for the unusable weapon
were it not for the harboring of no illusions
were it not for the weight of history
were it not for the end of history
were it not for the death of the gods
were it not for the death of ideology
were it not for the end of days
were it not for the self-scrutiny
were it not for the psychoanalysis
were it not for the next appointment
were it not for the cynicism
were it not for the addiction
were it not for the propaganda
were it not for the pragmatic sense
were it not for the payment plan
were it not for the conservative streak
were it not for the public relations
were it not for the failed revolution
were it not for the reeducation
were it not for the neighborhood watch
were it not for the pessimistic outlook
were it not for the eternal optimism
were it not for the chronic depression
were it not for the agoraphobia
were it not for the vertigo
were it not for the paranoia
were it not for the sneaking suspicion
were it not for the justifiable fears
were it not for the life on the lam
were it not for the arm of the law
were it not for the life of poverty
were it not for the marketing of dreams
were it not for the marketplace of ideas



were it not for the blood and the sand



were it not for the cold earth



were it not for the death foretold



were it not for the words of the prophet



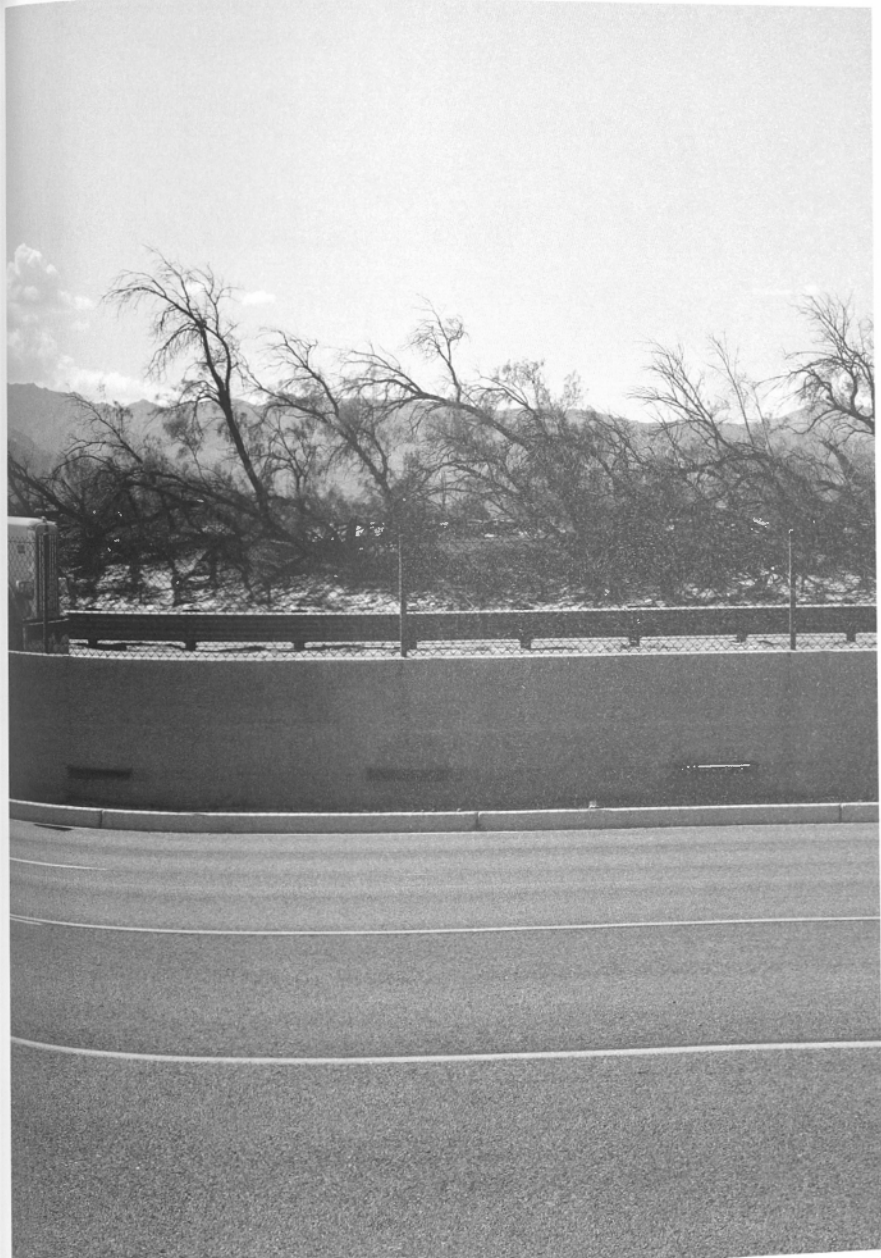
were it not for the communist cells



were it not for the red scare



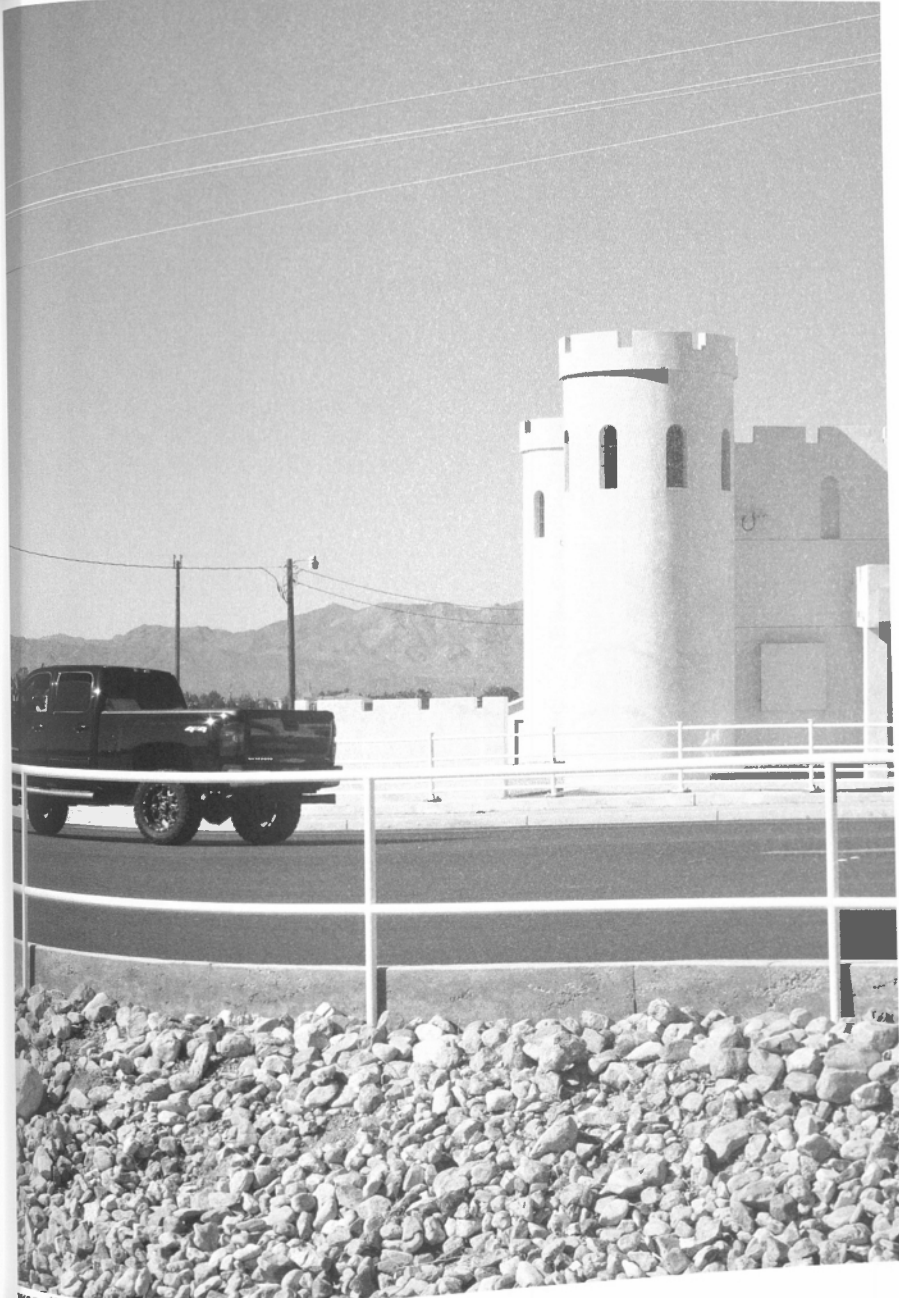
were it not for the means of extraction



were it not for the no fresh start



were it not for the ominous prediction



were it not for the caught unawares

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were it not for the dunes beyond the dunes