

Of the Vegas Dead

Ryan Garth Mitchell

The Old Mormon Fort,
dead now, was born
of adobe. Provisional,
the sticks, straw, and mud
didn't last, nor did the conversions
of the natives, a desert-scrubbed
lot who has since been shoved
to drier ground. The visitor center
draws several genealogists each
day. Around the corner, vagrants
put bags to faces, lean
against poles which advertise
payday loans. Just miles
away as the helicopter flies
is a construction zone;
it covers the scattered shotgun
feathers of an imploded
landmark. It is widely
reported once the project
is completed, scores of jobs
will be sparked. Howard
Hughes, a dead recluse
from Texas, has his billion-
dollar name on everything.
An excavation would reveal
a few resident bird bones
but mostly cigarette butts
of strangers that stand tall
in the hardpan like tombstones.

by Ryan Garth Mitchell