

Readux

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**City of Rumor:
The Compulsion to Write About Berlin**

Gideon Lewis-Kraus

There is a measure of unaccountable time you can spend in Berlin and write it off as extended-holiday frippery. But there comes a Rubiconic moment, after which you'll find it hard to leave without having something to say for yourself. You've probably gone to Berlin in part because of its reputation for world-historical fun. If you've found yourself there in some bounded way—on a fellowship before graduate school, say—the fun serves just fine. But if your move is an open-ended affair, the fun takes its course, and then, to avoid that obscure sense of having failed at being somewhere, you need an exit strategy. Some exit strategies allow you to stay: falling in love with a German, say, or going to German graduate school. Other exit visas allow you to leave. Falling in love with someone in Paris. Getting a job in London. You need some finding that retroactively validates the whole experiment. Because you've set yourself up, is the thing...