

Lament

by [Jeff Gundy](#) in the [June 30, 2009](#) issue

In the sixth week in the beautiful city it all threatened
to go awry, too many days of cloud and drizzle, too much time

to sit idly with neither reliably bad American cable
nor the usual cohort of neighbors and associates,

overfamiliar or not. How many times could we study
the cloud-shrouded mountains, the muddy stretch waiting

to dry and go under the asphalt? How many churches
could we wander into, ponder briefly for their artwork

and architectural features (Roman, baroque, gothic,
even all three in one multilayered building,

assembled over a whole millennium), the silent arches,
the bare bulbs dangling from 40-foot cords, the iron gates

and wistful announcements of occasional services?
How many evenings, even, the skies suddenly clear

and the Untersberg bare and muted in the southeast,
the western slopes open and shadowed at the same time,

the sun descending unstopably to the courts of some lost empire?