

Eugene Alper

A Traveling Salesman's Lamentation
at the Poison Control Center
An exercise on a single rhyme

Oh, devious and tricky pill,
I thought you were Benadryl!
But now I feel a piercing drill
Through my intestine boring still.
Unless I drink some chamomile
I may be really, really ill.

And then? Oh, more depressing still,
The thought of sliding downhill
Towards the stygian standstill,
That of becoming just a fill
In some eternal grassy hill;
A speck of dust in a landfill.

So could this all be just for nil?

But wait, my fate, oh wait until
I could develop all my skill
And go bravely through the mill
Of life experience—then kill!

A wretched mule pulling his thill,
I've only paid my Visa bill;
And have been just a lousy shill,
Selling a drill after a drill.
I wasted on the window sill,
Gaping and gazing at the Mil-
Ky Way but daring not to thrill.
To go beyond I had no will!
What thoughts does early death instill!

I haven't even written my will!
I haven't traveled to Brazil!
I haven't caught a single brill;
I haven't pulled it by the gill
(They say it's good when topped with dill).

Oh, how much I could fulfill!
I'd drop my couch at Goodwill
And go to see, say, Bunker Hill;
Or testify on Capitol Hill;
Or be a star like Doctor Phil;
Or I might listen to the Phil;
Or I myself might sing with trill,
(And really sing, not simply shrill).
I'd travel far, maybe Seville
Where Quixote fought the mill;
And end my days in the Bastille;
Or labor at a stamping mill—
Not to procure but build that drill!
Or—stranger yet—to sew a frill—
I'd exercise and fire-drill
And scribble poems with a quill;
I'd learn to feed a whale with krill
And, while at sea, prevent a spill;
And watch a lion make the kill.
I'd live and love and walk uphill,
Not eat and drink, but wolf and swill!

And after I have had my fill
I still would like someday to chill
And, with my love, to have some thrill;
And fire up my own grill;
And maybe purchase a treadmill;
And bike to work—someday I will!

Oh, how much I could fulfill
If not for this obnoxious pill!
I thought it was just Benadryl...

Oh, Doctor, will I live until...?
"You're ok and healthy still.
It was a scare. Here's a pill,
Take twice a day, then a refill."
Oh, thank you, thank you Doctor Bill!
M-m-m-may I suggest you buy a drill?