

Except, inexplicably, the last

by [Stephen Kampa](#) in the [June 30, 2021](#) issue

*Nearly all animals produce their own vitamin C, but we can't. We undertake every part of the process except, inexplicably, the last step, the production of a single enzyme. —Bill Bryson*

After however  
many steps to manufacture  
our own vitamin  
C, we  
stop. I could imagine  
in that some  
diligent divinity  
who, having mostly finished  
the delicate design  
and straightened  
out unexpected kinks, starts  
from the workbench  
and thinks,  
*I bet they'd like*  
*oranges*, and arranges  
our one  
missing enzyme, a shortfall  
that means eons  
later some  
ballyhooer will stand blossom-besotted  
and belly-holler blithely

(if also  
somewhat ironically) *By Jove!*  
during a jaunt

through those  
sweet-scented acres that compose  
his citrus grove.