

The Number 52: Shall I Compare You?

by [Paul Martin Freeman](#) (January 2023)



(With apologies to the fair sex)

Shall I compare you to the 52?
Let's start with how you stand me up on dates.
The 52, though often overdue,
At least attempts the times the table states.

And though the bus may lack a certain charm
With paintwork that has witnessed better days,
Its colour scheme will never cause alarm

As do the fires of Hell your rinse conveys.

And then unlike your dangling lingerie,
That casualty of gravity and time,
The seats are overhauled continually
To keep them up, secure and free of grime.

And if the bus's massive metal chassis
That runs on gas has little sex appeal,
Its twin exhausts are never quite so gassy
They belch and fart with your accustomed zeal.

And though alluringly it may not smile,
Nor ever pout arousing thoughts of sin,
The 52 is yet the face of style
Compared with your disturbing toothless grin.

And while the bus's gears and rack and pinions
With steely, quiet complexity perplex,
You rack me constantly with your opinions,
Continuing the shouting during sex.

And finally, it gets a scrubbing weekly,
More frequently than ever said of you.
An evening on it also ends more cheaply—
And so, my dear, I choose the 52.

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Paul Freeman is an art dealer in London. The poem is from *The Bus Poems: A Tale of the Devil*, currently in preparation. His book, *A Chocolate Box Menagerie*, is published by New English Review Press and is available [here](#).

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