

The Number 53: To His Coy Transport

by [Paul Martin Freeman](#) (December 2022)



Had we but world enough and time,
My coy and tardy 53,
This hesitancy were no crime
And I'd be waiting patiently.

When other buses came along
I'd not obstruct or block the queue.
If someone barged me in the throng
Without a word I'd let them through.

And if they trod upon my toes
Or knocked the vodka from my hand,
I'd contemplate my other woes
And try to think it wasn't planned.

I'd beam at all and try being happy;
I'd dump my surly teenage look.
I'd be polite and not be snappy:
I might pretend to read a book!

I'd help old dearies hump their bags
And wheelchairs gently shove on board.
I'd chat to kiddies, mums and dads
So no one ever felt ignored.

And if it rained I wouldn't mind
Though like a rat I seemed to drown.
I'd smile and never stop being kind—
I'd even turn my music down!

And all these things and more I'd do
Had we two but the time to spare.
No matter how long overdue
I'd wait for you and wouldn't care.

But in my ear I always hear
My mum creating on the phone.
She'll ground me for a week, I fear,
At ten o'clock if I'm not home.

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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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