

# 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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