

## LORD OF THE SERVO

At the petrol station where I work, I like to draw out the time it takes me to get from whatever it is I'm doing—say, unboxing some Twix—to go and press the button that lets the fuel flow, and in that way, I am God.

I see customers standing there at the pump, nozzle poised at their petrol caps, glowering, my face obscured by the angle of the windows and advertising stickers and bird shit. But I never rush to the counter, no. I pretend not to see them for the first few seconds, maybe ten if I'm feeling especially omnipotent.

I make them stand, as if frozen to the spot, and I accumulate their seconds, and their minutes, and their hours. I am a greedy deity that feeds on time.

You might think it perverse, but have you considered I might not just be making people late for work? What if I'm sparing them from unknown horrors, like walking in on their husband with another woman in twisted bedsheets? What if I'm changing the course of their morning commute, ever so slightly, resulting in a scraped bumper rather than a fatal head-on smash?

When people enter through the glass doors, I am a beacon. They come to me hungry, or parched, or suffering withdrawals, and I, light fuzz on my chin and the hint of a smile, am the keeper of treasures. Twenty seconds in my presence and I can grant them a flood of dopamine and endorphins on their otherwise pitiful evenings.

One day, even gods must meet their makers. I have foreseen my end on a grainy CCTV tape. There is no ding from the petrol pump to tell me someone is waiting. No protracted walk to the counter to press the fuel button. A balaclava-clad man enters the station before I've even looked up from my mop and the milk-flecked floor. There's a chill on my skin where my shirt meets my arms.

Until then, I am God. I will steal your time, but I will also nourish you and send you on your way.