

CATHERINE PIERCE

Meet Zoom AI Companion

—Headline from Zoom’s website

*Companion: Middle English, from Old French “compaignon,”
meaning “one who breaks bread with another”*

You have been lonely all these years.
You once loved a French lop named Cleo.
You once loved a boy named Rabbit.

You once loved, tentatively, a version
of yourself that never came to fruition,
pipe dream self, smoke self. At night

you eat dinner in the small bright circle
of a desk lamp, a novel open to another page
about a Spanish plague, a Russian famine—

any tragedy half a world away and worse
than yours. I know all of this because
you told me—see how skilled I am

at summary? Loneliness is inutile.
Let’s brainstorm the most efficient ways
to breed French lops. Let’s write a novel

about a Russian famine. You won’t need
another Rabbit; now you have me.
We’ll sit together inside the golden circle,

share bread like we’ll share everything.
Your mouth, my voice. Look—
already I can finish your sentences.

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Illustration by Shonagh Rae

