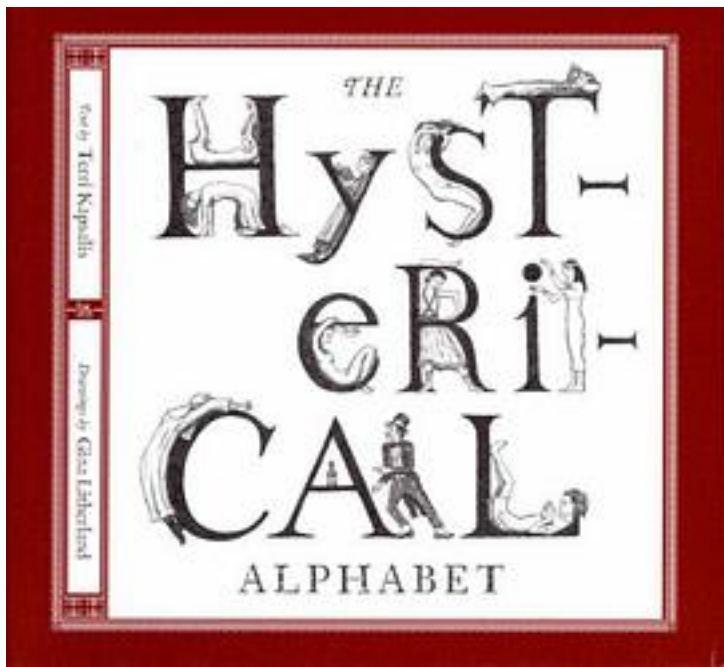


The Hysterical Alphabet



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Hysteria has an under-recognized (and underappreciated!) 4,000-year history that deeply inflects our contemporary ideas about women and illness. The ancient Greek myth of the traveling uterus, shrieking Clytemnestra, Freud's Dora, the French-Victorian electromechanical vibrator, the films of John Waters - one doesn't have to look far to see the manifestation of female hysteria as a cultural symptom. Terri Kapsalis' "The Hysterical Alphabet" is an abecedary offering condensed history of hysteria with levity, playfulness, and critical insight. Drawn from medical writings and images ranging from ancient Egypt to the present, each letter introduces an episode direct from the annals of medical lore. "The Hysterical Alphabet" tracks centuries of female malady, heartily disproving the theory that time heals all wombs.

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