

# HYSTERA

LAUREN HAMILTON





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It's possible you're just unlucky with your periods.



*The Gynecologist's Room*

You're doctor is very thorough, isn't she?

Thorough?

Does she think I'm being dramatic?

I didn't prepare any of these questions

*That's normal*

*That's normal*

She seems annoyed

Maybe I am being dramatic



Oh, that's cold

Ah, that's kind of sore

I'm probably just being dramatic

It probably doesn't even hurt that much

No, that very much does hurt

Fuck, that's ridiculously painful

Is she even trying to be gentle?

I can't. I can't. I can't

"I can't"





Why does she look worried now?

She probably just realised,

I am actually in pain

Maybe I'm not being dramatic

You're doing great

Just a few more seconds

I really don't know,

If I can do a few more seconds



Don't scream

Hold it

Hold it

Hold it

What are you studying?

This room feels like a torture chamber

I want to go home



I wasn't aware I was tensing and  
squeezing my whole lower body  
from my abdomen to my toes  
until she said that

You know how people carry stress in their shoulders?

You carry yours in your vagina



### *The Sonographers Waiting Room*

Internal scan

Internal scan

Internal scan

How do they even do internal scans?

Oh, please don't think about that right now

Please don't start crying in the waiting room

How many of these do I have to do?

Poked and prodded by unfamiliar hands

I feel sick



She looks my age

She's on her own too

I wonder what she's in for

She looks terrified too

Oddly comforting

At least we can be terrified together

Lauren Hamilton?

Oh God, here we go



I sat down on the chair, and I just started crying

Crying?

Maybe because she seemed so gentle

Or maybe because my pain felt the possibility of being seen

I was surprised when it didn't hurt as bad as last time



You see this? That's the wall of your uterus

And see here? That's...

This feels weird

Is this the same scan they use for pregnancies?

So what we're looking for is any...

Where would the embryo be?

I wonder what the heartbeat would sound like



*The Phone Call*

I feel relieved

Guilty after the fact

But I knew I knew my body





I knew I knew my body





Sharp electric shocks tear *their* way up my pelvis from my vagina



It's hard to stand when *they* push against me



I collapse, but my body stands bloody





A burning tension clings to my insides as *they* roll around in my skin







I ice below my stomach to try and numb them







The concept of Hysteria originates from ancient Greek medicine and became entwined with Hippocrates' theory of 'The Wandering Womb'. This theory claimed the womb as a living creature, that, when unsatisfied, would detach itself from its rightful place and roam the female body, inducing hysteria. The diagnosis and treatment of hysteria provided a rationale for many invasive and painful procedures. The use of photography in diagnosing hysteria required the patient to perform their symptoms for the camera, revealing a long, disturbing history of the medical treatment of women and their bodies. Drawing on this history, 'Hystera' intimately reflects on the experience of living with endometriosis and the challenges of receiving such a diagnosis. By delving into societal attitudes of the past, 'Hystera' confronts what remains of this in the present.

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#### Performers / Participants

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