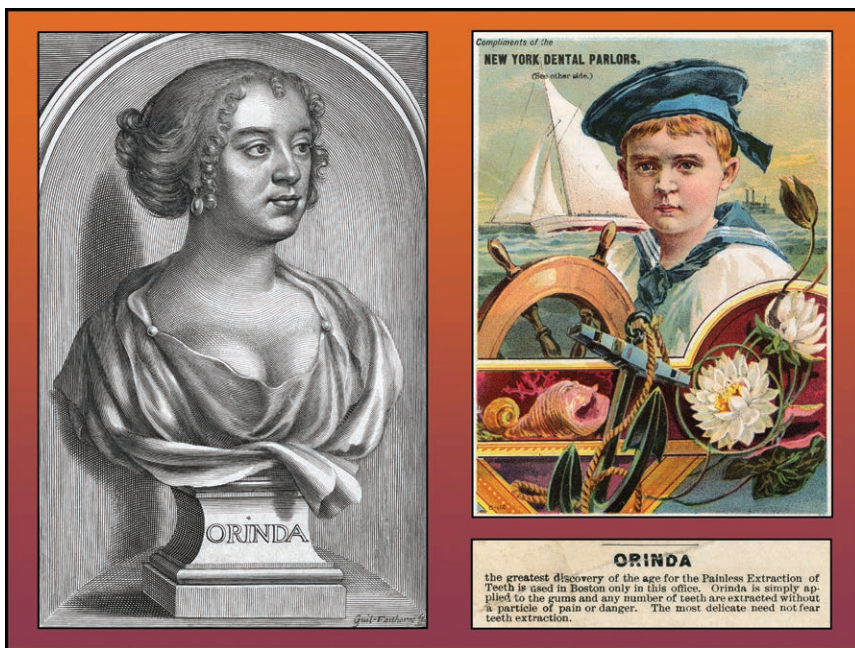


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ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS FROM THE WOOD LIBRARY-MUSEUM

Tracing “Orinda” from Corneille to Cocaine: A “Matchless” *Nom-de-plume*, but Outmatched Numbing



After reading the entire Bible at the age of four, Katherine Fowler (1632 to 1664) surprised the English public first as a child prodigy, then as a teenaged polyglot, and finally as a 16-year-old royalist bride to a much older antiroyalist groom. An unabashed Francophile, she was memorialized by the 1667 posthumous publication of *Poems by the Most Deservedly Admired Mrs. Katherine Philips, the Matchless Orinda* (its frontispiece, left), which included her brilliant translations of Pierre Corneille’s tragedies *Horace* and *Pompée*. Over 230 years later, Philips’ *nom-de-plume* “Orinda” was borrowed for use by two dental offices as the “greatest discovery of the age,” a cocaine-laced compound for the “Painless Extraction of Teeth” (extracts from Boston’s “New York Dental Parlors” trade card, right). Centuries before, in England, the “matchless” Katherine Philips had died from smallpox at the tender age of 33; however, in New England, her namesake anesthetic, Orinda—outmatched by proprietary competitors—did not survive even 33 months. And so, a poet and a painkiller shared more than a name; each was long in promise but short in lifespan. (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists’ Wood Library–Museum of Anesthesiology.)

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