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**Sinopsis**

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Poet and post-punk hero Eileen Myles has always operated in the art, writing, and queer performance scenes as a kind of observant flaneur. Myles travels the city\_wandering on garbage-strewn New York streets in the heat of summer, drifting though the antiseptic malls of La Jolla, and riding in the van with Sister Spit\_seeing it with a poet's eye for detail and with the consciousness that writing about art and culture has always been a social gesture. Culled by the poet from twenty years of art writing, the essays in *The Importance of Being Iceland* make a lush document of her\_and our\_lives in these contemporary crowds.

Framed by Myles's account of her travels in Iceland, these essays posit inbetweenness as the most vital position from which to perceive culture as a whole, and a fluidity in national identity as the best model for writing and thinking about art and culture. The essays include fresh takes on Thoreau's Cape Cod walk, working class speech, James Schuyler and Björk, queer Russia and Robert Smithson; how-tos on writing an avant-garde poem and driving a battered Japanese car that resembles a menopausal body; and opinions on such widely ranging subjects as filmmaker Sadie Benning, actor Daniel Day-Lewis, Ted Berrigan's Sonnets, and flossing.