Running in the Family:
Don’t Talk To Me About Matisse – Eclipse Plumage

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What is Ceylon? (63)
Ceylon is:

- Island off the coast of Sri Lanka
- Where his ancestors are from
Where did Michael see his family’s name engraved? (65-66)
Where did Michael see his family’s name engraved?

- He saw his last name engraved in St. Thomas’ Church.
- It was the name of his grandfather’s wife, who had died at the age of 25.
- How do you think Michael felt when he saw the Ondaatje name in the church?
How did the Ondaatje family get their last name? (63-64)
How did the Ondaatje family get their last name?

- An ancestor that arrives to Ceylon cures the residing governor’s daughter
- He uses a strange herb
- As a reward, he is given a foreign wife, land, and the Dutch-spelled last name, “Ondaatje”
Lalla forces her son Noel to eat a thalagoya tongue, but he gets sick and almost dies. (72-75)

Are there any particular traditions in your family or culture that are unique?
Lalla’s life was lived passionately, for her kids, for her lovers, and for herself.

Because of this, Lalla’s life was guided by her passions. It drove her crazy to be “grabbed or contained by anyone.” (119)

What are the passions that control/dictate the way you live? How do your passions effect your life?
Sweet Like a Crow (76-77)

- Ondaatje’s poem about Ceylonese music is very descriptive.
- Read the poem as a group and discuss one of your favorite descriptions.
- Why do you think Michael Ondaatje wrote this poem?