

Michael Ondaatje

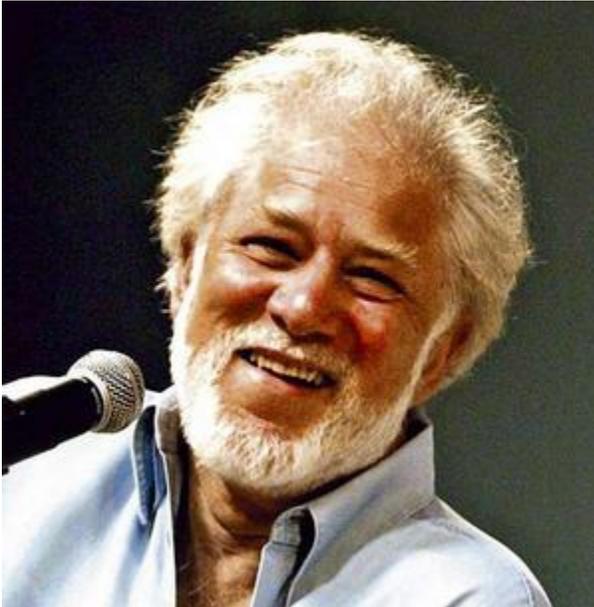


Photo: [United Architects](#)

His most recent novel, *The Cat's Table*, has been getting a lot of attention. It was reviewed by [The New Yorker](#) in May, [The Guardian](#) and [The Independent](#) in August and [The Telegraph](#) in September. Three days ago, Nick Owchar gave author and book a positive review in the [LA Times](#) as it moved to Number 1 spot on the *New York Times* bestseller list.

[Michael Ondaatje](#) was born in Colombo and lived in England before coming to Canada. He was educated in Toronto and Kingston and began publishing poetry in the seventies, winning his first of several Governor General's Award for the collection *There's a Trick with a Knife I'm Learning to Do* in 1971. In 1982 he published a memoir, *Running in the Family*, after a trip back to Sri Lanka (still called Ceylon when he left.)

*The English Patient* (1992) was a lyrical novel that garnered huge attention and won the Man Booker Prize. In 1996, it was made into a blockbuster [movie](#) directed by Anthony Minghella and starring [Juliette Binoche](#), Kristin Scott Thomas and [Ralph Fiennes](#).

An earlier novel, [In the Skin of a Lion](#) (1987) is an exciting portrayal of Canada in the 1920s and 1930s. It won three Canadian literary awards, and on a personal note, I used it with several classes. The paper back version has the distinction of being one of the only novels I thumbed through so much that I literally wore it out. Even though I got a new one, I couldn't bring myself to throw away the original, which is still on the shelf in my office, held together by an elastic band.

The author has also published two other [novels](#) called *Anil's Ghost* (2000) and *Divisadero* (2007) and a variety of other work. According to the British Council Literature website, [Ondaatje](#) is "one of Canada's most important contemporary writers and one of the country's biggest cultural exports." Ondaatje is an Officer of the Order of Canada and a Foreign Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters.