

Jacqueline Bishop

GAUGIN

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One day he just up and stepped out of the life he was living: The big, blond, Danish wife, the children, the job --- *Agent de Change* --- in Paris.

One day he just decided to follow something that had long been calling and calling. Let me be clear here: I am not saying that what Gaugin did

was correct --- abandoning one's wife, one's children --- I would not have wanted to be *Mette-Sophie*¹. I am not even saying that this was the only way to follow

one's vision out into the world. And I am not talking here about the young Tahitian girls --- *Teha'amana*; the two, sitting in the foreground of *Te Rerioa* ;

and the girls (long dead) who we will forever ask, *When Will You Marry?* Their faces, full blown hibiscus flowers; taut plump dark bodies, every man's

not-so-secret fantasy. No, I am not saying that this was right either. But what I am asking you, is if you've never come upon something so darkly

exciting running through the purple-blue veins of your pure Kurdish blood? What passions, if any, flow beneath the surface of your unruffled olive skin?

¹ Gaugin's wife

I am talking here about something you felt you had to possess, or you knew in the end would possess you --- *and it would, and it did, it always did* ---

I am talking here about something you felt you had to do.