

RON DE MARIS

A Tear for Gauguin

He could have made a fortune on the Bourse
So good he was as prophet
Of money and its flow. He chose,
Instead, to be a weekend painter,
Abandoned a loving wife and children,
Rich in-laws, the envy
His colleagues unashamedly displayed.
He came to Hiva Ova in the end, penniless,
Shivering with syphilis, the last
Cannibal on the last cannibal
Isle of the Marquesas,
Too weak to climb for coconuts
Or spear his own food. All Paris
Envied him. He lived in everyone's
Myth but his own.
His life was tragic, his misery
Self-inflicted. Yet he had the courage
To follow his own precept:
"Give the eye pleasure not grief."