

CNEL 2021  
Département Littératures et Langage

Sujet d'anglais

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« La Ronde du Diable », Amy Lowell (1925)

Analysing this poem, you will discuss in English the embattled vision of poetic creation it evinces, particularly through the competition it involves between male and female poets. Taking the form into account, you will comment on what the poem unveils about Lowell's personal conception of poetry.

## La Ronde du Diable

"Here we go round the ivy-bush," \*  
And that's a tune we all dance to.  
Little poet people snatching ivy,  
Trying to prevent one another from snatching ivy.  
5 If you get a leaf, there's another for me;  
Look at the bush.  
But I want your leaf, Brother, and you mine,  
Therefore, of course, we push.

"Here we go round the laurel-tree."  
10 Do we want laurels for ourselves most,  
Or most that no one else shall have any?  
We cannot stop to discuss the question.  
We cannot stop to plait them into crowns  
Or notice whether they become us.  
15 We scarcely see the laurel-tree,  
The crowd about us is all we see,  
And there's no room in it for you and me.  
Therefore, Sisters, it's my belief  
We've none of us very much chance at a leaf.

20 "Here we go round the barberry-bush."  
It's a bitter, blood-red fruit at best,  
Which puckers the mouth and burns the heart.  
To tell the truth, only one or two  
Want the berries enough to strive  
25 For more than he has, more than she.  
An acid berry for you and me.  
Abundance of berries for all who will eat,  
But an aching meat.  
That's poetry.  
30 And who wants to swallow a mouthful of sorrow?  
The world is old and our century  
Must be well along, and we've no time to waste.  
Make haste, Brothers and Sisters, push  
With might and main round the ivy-bush,  
35 Struggle and pull at the laurel-tree,  
And leave the barberries be  
For poor lost lunatics like me,  
Who set them so high  
They overtop the sun in the sky.  
40 Does it matter at all that we don't know why?

Amy Lowell, 1925.

\* "Here we go round the Mulberry bush": A traditional singing game for children, usually associated with a set of actions, occasionally distinguishing boys and girls.