Literary Analysis 1: Figurative Language

Writers Frost, Angelou, and Piercy use figurative language—language that implies more than its literal, word-for-word meaning. Figurative language makes writing more interesting for readers because it connects an abstract idea—such as the value of meaningful work—to a concrete image—such as the image of an ox pulling a cart through mud.

**DIRECTIONS:** Consider the following lines in the context of each work. Then, in your own words, describe the abstract and concrete ideas that are being compared in each passage.

“**The Road Not Taken**”

**Example:** Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—/I took the one less traveled by,/And That has made all the difference.

**Concrete Image:** two roads that separate in the woods

**Comparison:** The writer compares two roads in the woods and the choice a traveler makes between them to an important decision a person makes and the life he or she has led as a result.

“**The Road Not Taken**”

1. Oh, I kept the first for another day!/Yet knowing how way leads on to way,/I doubted if I should ever come back.

Concrete image:

Comparison:

“**To be of use**”

2. The work of the world is common as mud./Botched, it smears the hands, crumbles to dust./But the thing worth doing well done/has a shape that satisfies, clean and evident.

Concrete image:

Comparison:
3. In her words, “I looked up the road I was going and back the way I come, and since I wasn’t satisfied, I decided to step off the road and cut me a new path.”

Concrete image:

Comparison: