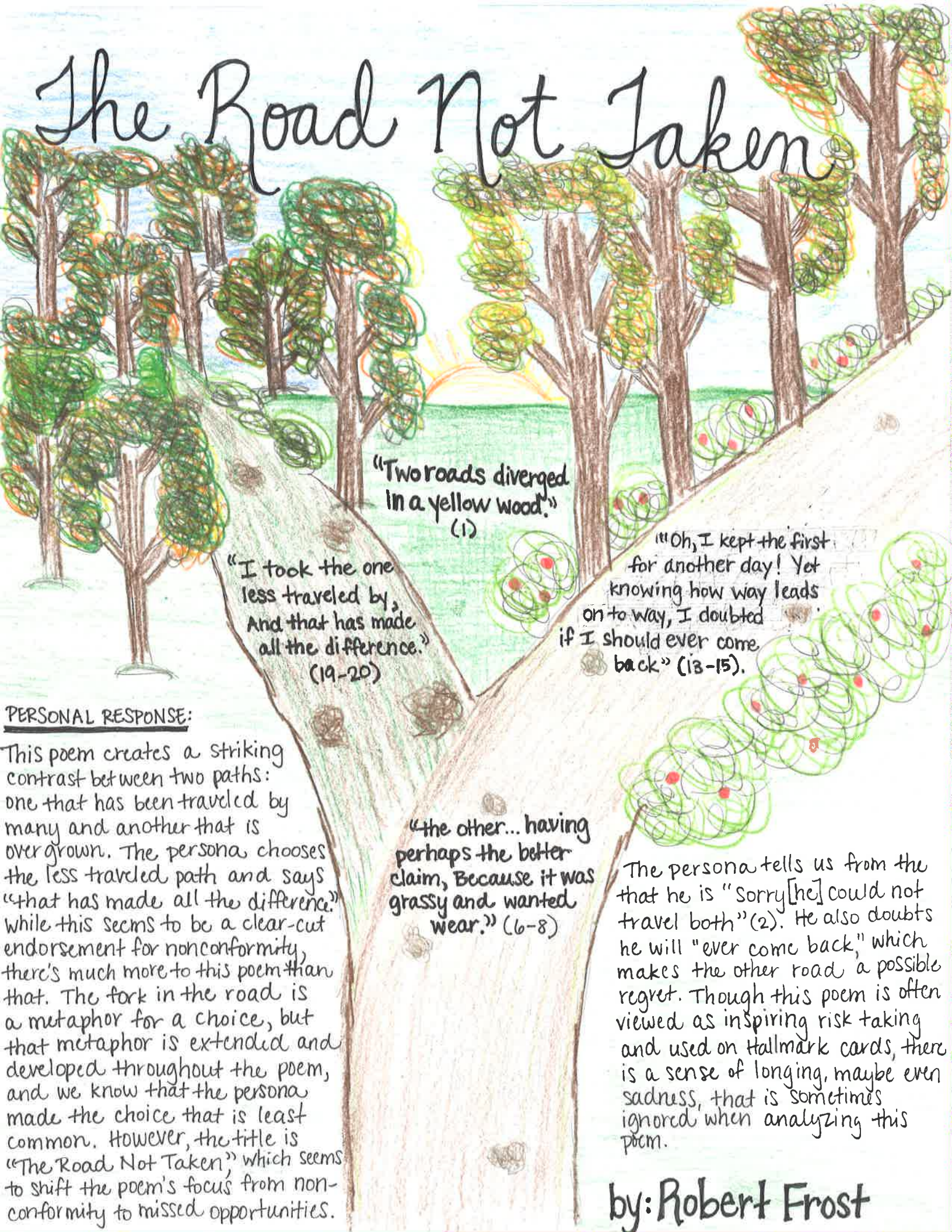


The Road Not Taken



"Two roads diverged
in a yellow wood."
(1)

"I took the one
less traveled by,
And that has made
all the difference."
(19-20)

"Oh, I kept the first
for another day! Yet
knowing how way leads
on to way, I doubted
if I should ever come
back" (13-15).

"the other... having
perhaps the better
claim, Because it was
grassy and wanted
wear." (6-8)

The persona tells us from the that he is "sorry[he] could not travel both" (2). He also doubts he will "ever come back," which makes the other road a possible regret. Though this poem is often viewed as inspiring risk taking and used on Hallmark cards, there is a sense of longing, maybe even sadness, that is sometimes ignored when analyzing this poem.

by: Robert Frost

PERSONAL RESPONSE:

This poem creates a striking contrast between two paths: one that has been traveled by many and another that is overgrown. The persona chooses the less traveled path and says "that has made all the difference." While this seems to be a clear-cut endorsement for nonconformity, there's much more to this poem than that. The fork in the road is a metaphor for a choice, but that metaphor is extended and developed throughout the poem, and we know that the persona made the choice that is least common. However, the title is "The Road Not Taken," which seems to shift the poem's focus from non-conformity to missed opportunities.