A Modern Songbook

Volume One

Twenty Songs for High Voice and Piano

Lawrence Kramer

Juan Gris, “The Open Window.” Public Domain.

Contents

A Talisman (text: Marianne Moore)

Anecdote of the Prince of Peacocks (text: Wallace Stevens)

Another Fan (text: Stephane Mallarme)

Autumn Rain (text: Thomas Hardy)

Candle and Thorn (text: William Butler Yeats)

Fan Piece (text: Ezra Pound)

Its Own Summer (text: William Carlos Willams)

Look, We Have Come Through! (text: D. H. Lawrence)

May Day (text: Sarah Teasdale)

On the Way (text: Thomas Hardy)

Range Finding (text: Robert Frost)

Saint (text: Stephane Mallarme)

She Sweeps with Many-Colored Brooms (text: Emily Dickinson)

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening (text: Robert Frist)

The Corner of Night and Morning (text: Amy Lowell)

The Jumblies (text: Edward Lear)

The Soldier's Tale (text: Carl Sandburg)

To Waken an Old Lady (text: William Carlos Williams)

War (text: Arthur Rimbaud)

Windrose (text: Walt Whitman)

Preface

A Modern Songbook is a three-volume collection of songs for high voice, medium voice, and baritone, respectively. The songs were composed between 2016 and 2024. Several of them appear in multiple versions to accommodate different voice types. Several others are assigned to specific voices.

Most of the poems set here date from the early twentieth century. In part this is because the years between 1900 and 1928 offer a rich trove of public domain texts, but in part it is because this was the time in which the English language assumed the modern idiom that we still use today a century later. The language of these poems has a distinct quality of freshness about it that has always attracted me. For that reason I felt no sense of discontinuity in translating several texts originally written in other languages, by Rimbaud, Mallarmé, Apollinaire, and Rilke, into the English idiom of the present.

The range of poets is broad. The big names are here, most of them represented by their earlier work, but so too are poets who have been neglected or forgotten. In a few cases the texts have been slightly altered; in others the texts are composites.

A Talisman

Voice

Under a splintered mast,
torn from ship and cast
near her hull,

a stumbling shepherd found
embedded in the ground,
a sea-gull

of lapis lazuli,
a scarab of the sea,
with wings spread—

curling its coral feet,
parting its beak to greet
men long dead.

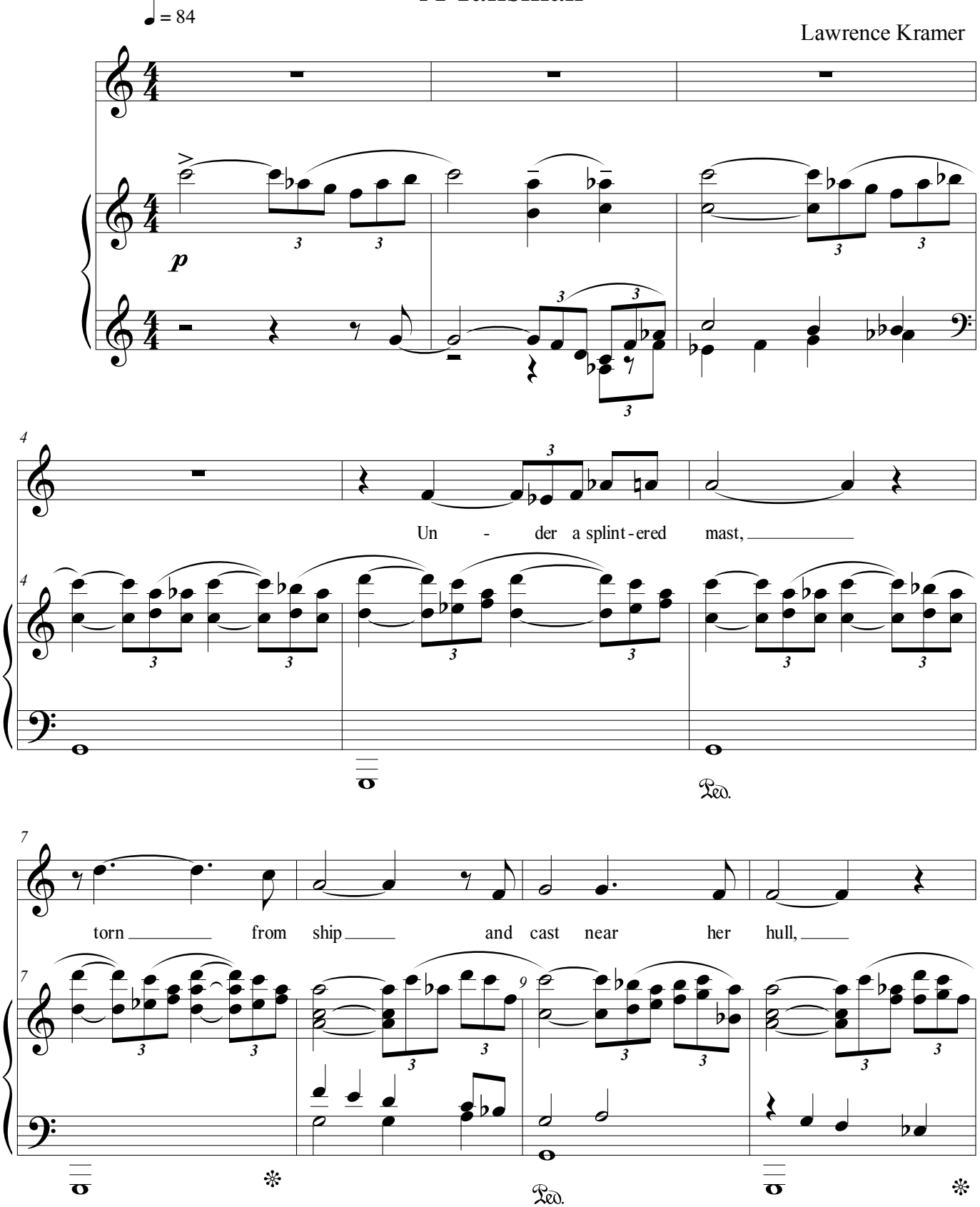
--Marianne Moore

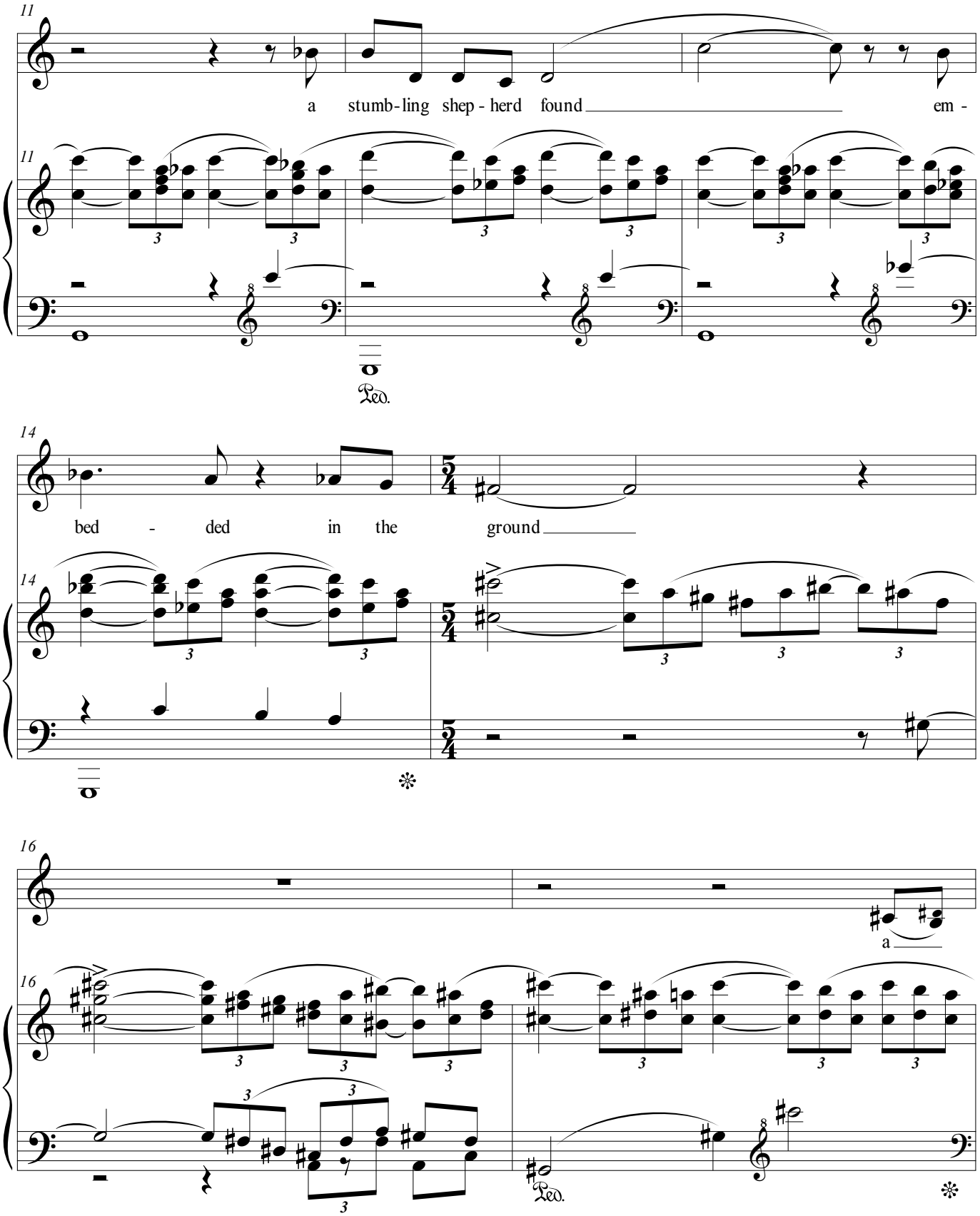
Written voice range: C4 - E5, with optional B3
Tessitura: E4 - D5
Duration: 3:20

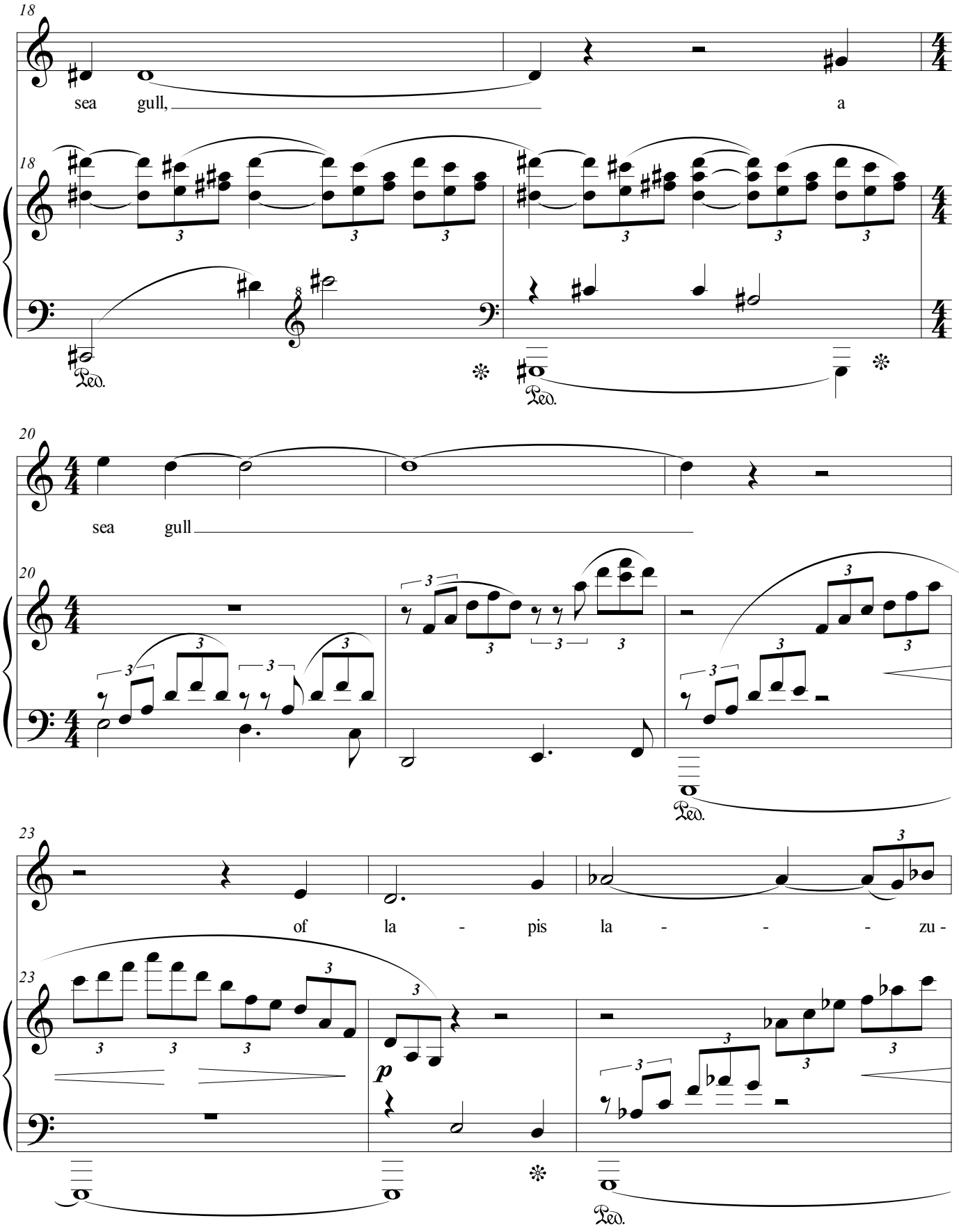
Composed 2017

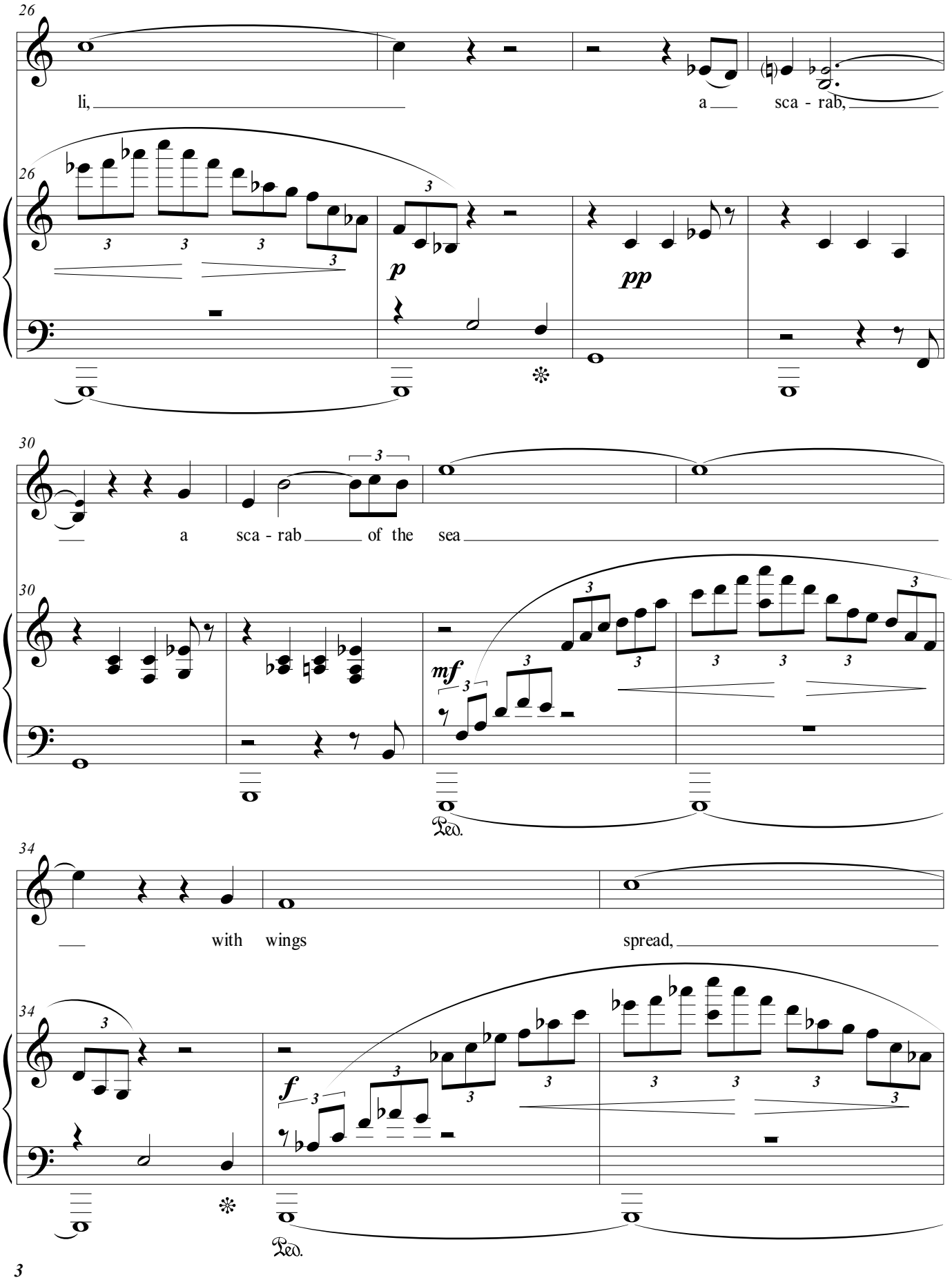
A Talisman

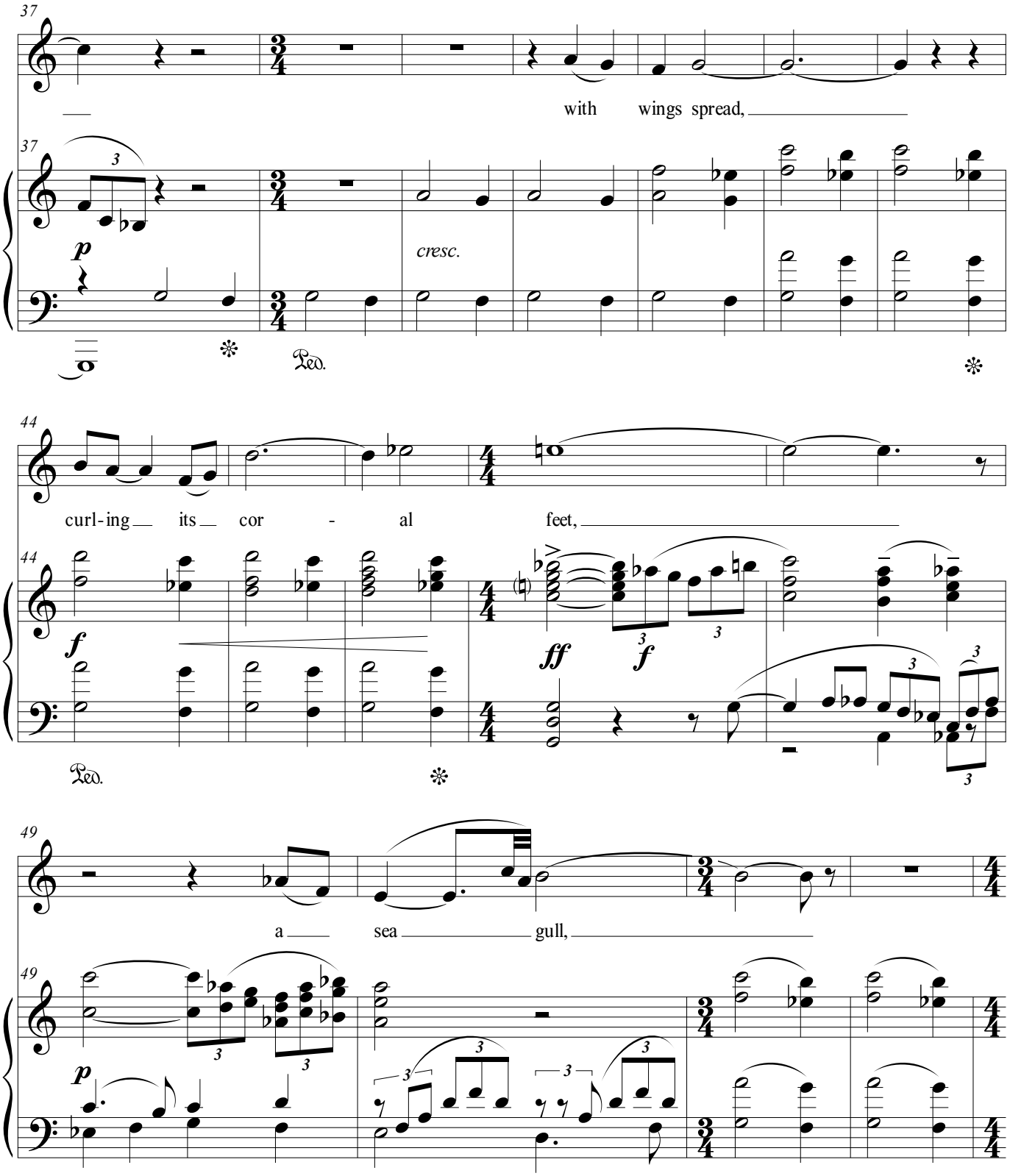
Lawrence Kramer

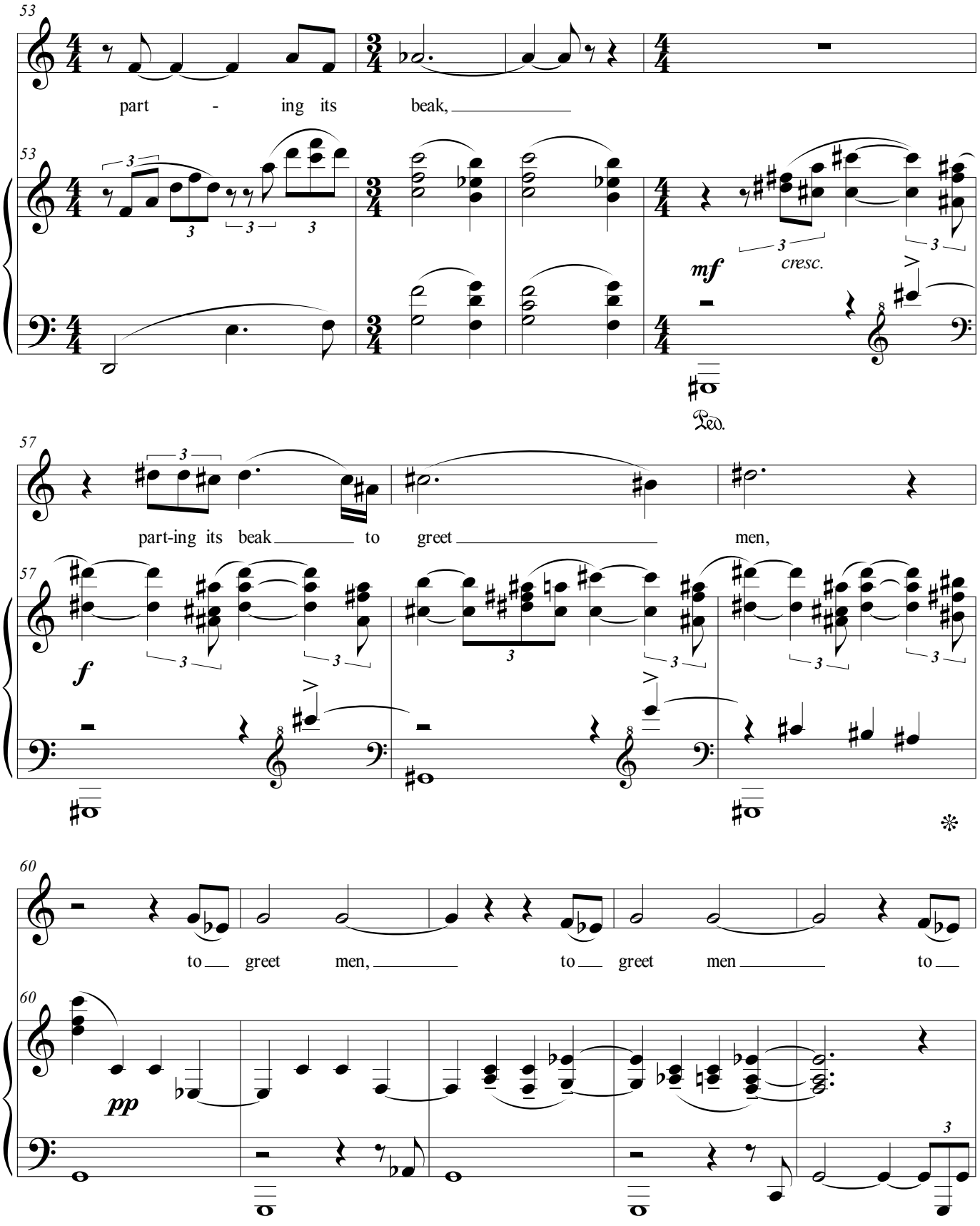


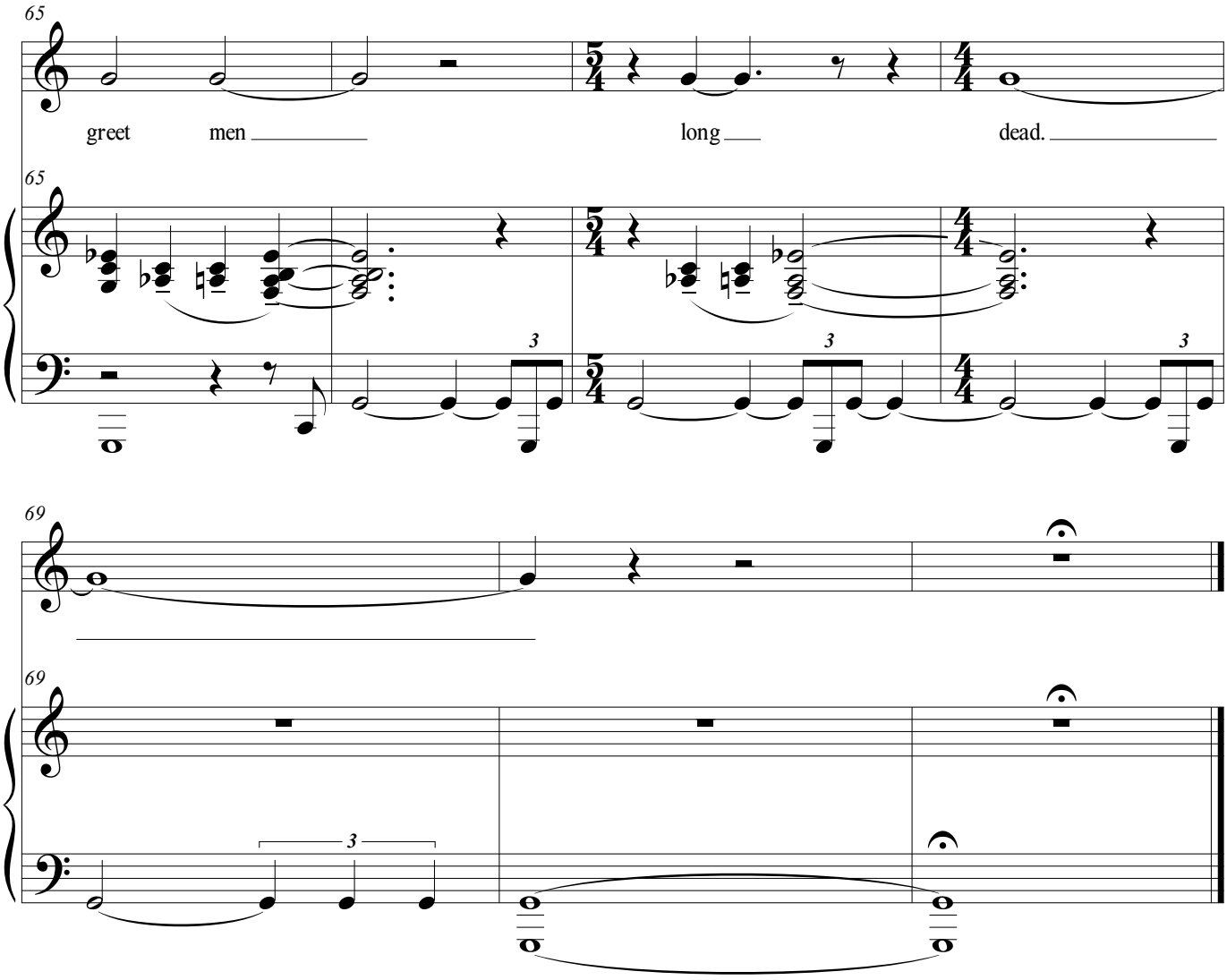

11
a stumb-ling shep - herd found em -
Ped.
14
bed - ded in the ground
16
a
Ped.


18
sea gull,
a
18
Ped.
20
sea gull
20
Ped.
23
of la - pis la - - - zu -
23
p
Ped.


26
li,
a
sca - rab,
p
pp
30
a
sca - rab
of the
sea
mf
Ped.
34
with
wings
spread,
f
Ped.


37
with wings spread,
37
p
cresc.
Ped.
44
curl-ing its cor - al feet,
44
f
ff
f
Ped.
49
a sea gull,
49
p


53
part - ing its beak,
mf
cresc.
Ped.
57
part-ing its beak to greet men,
f
60
to greet men, to greet men to
pp


65
greet men long dead.
65
3
3
3
69
69
3

A Modern Songbook, Volume I

Anecdote of the Prince of Peacocks

High Voice

In the moonlight
I met Berserk,
In the moonlight
On the bushy plain.
Oh, sharp he was
As the sleepless!

And, "Why are you red
In this milky blue?"
I said.

"Why sun-colored,
As if awake
In the midst of sleep?"

"You that wander,"
So he said,
"On the bushy plain,
Forget so soon.
But I set my traps
In the midst of dreams."

I knew from this
That the blue ground
Was full of blocks
And blocking steel.
I knew the dread
Of the bushy plain,

And the beauty
Of the moonlight
Falling there,
Falling
As sleep falls
In the innocent air.

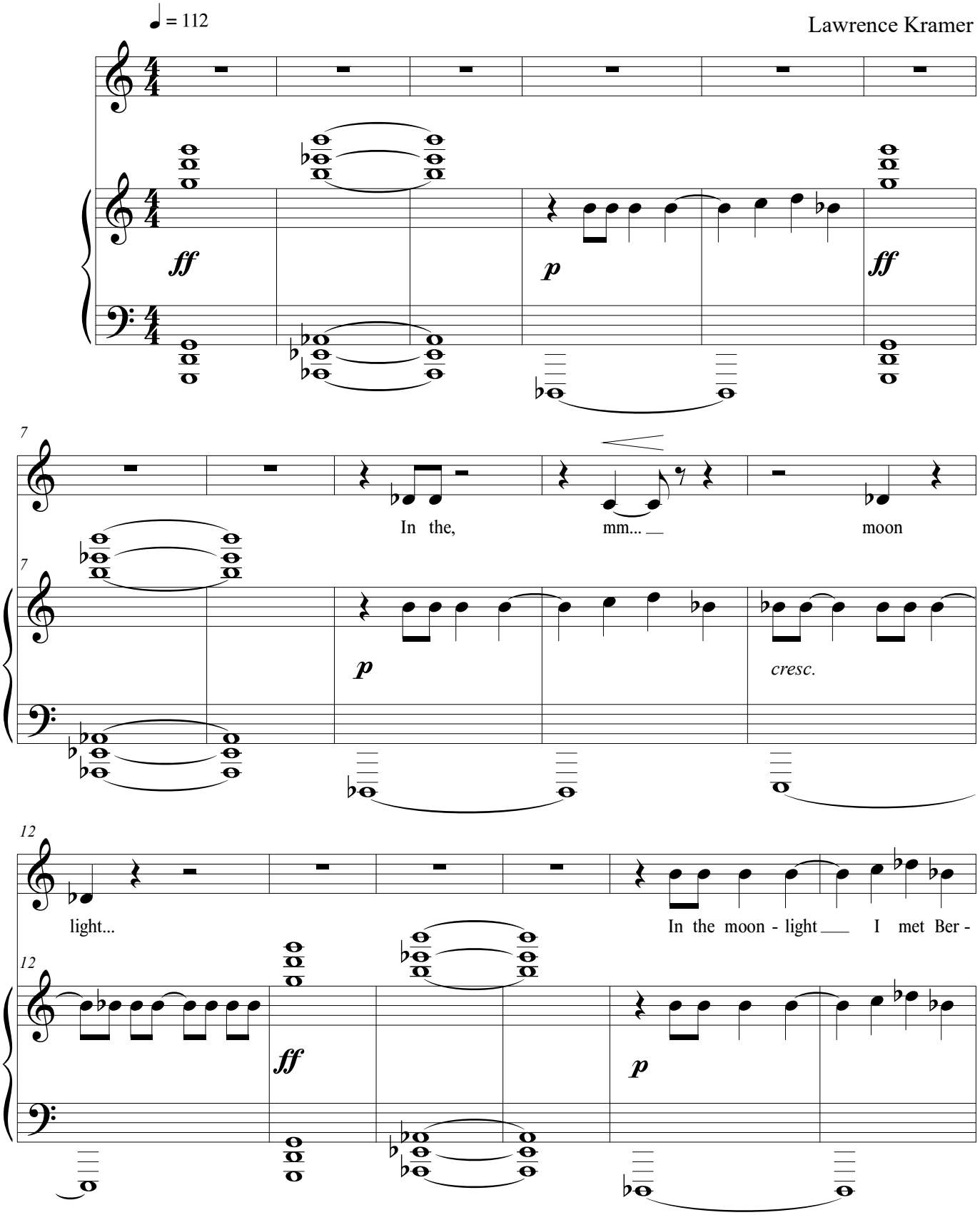
--Wallace Stevens

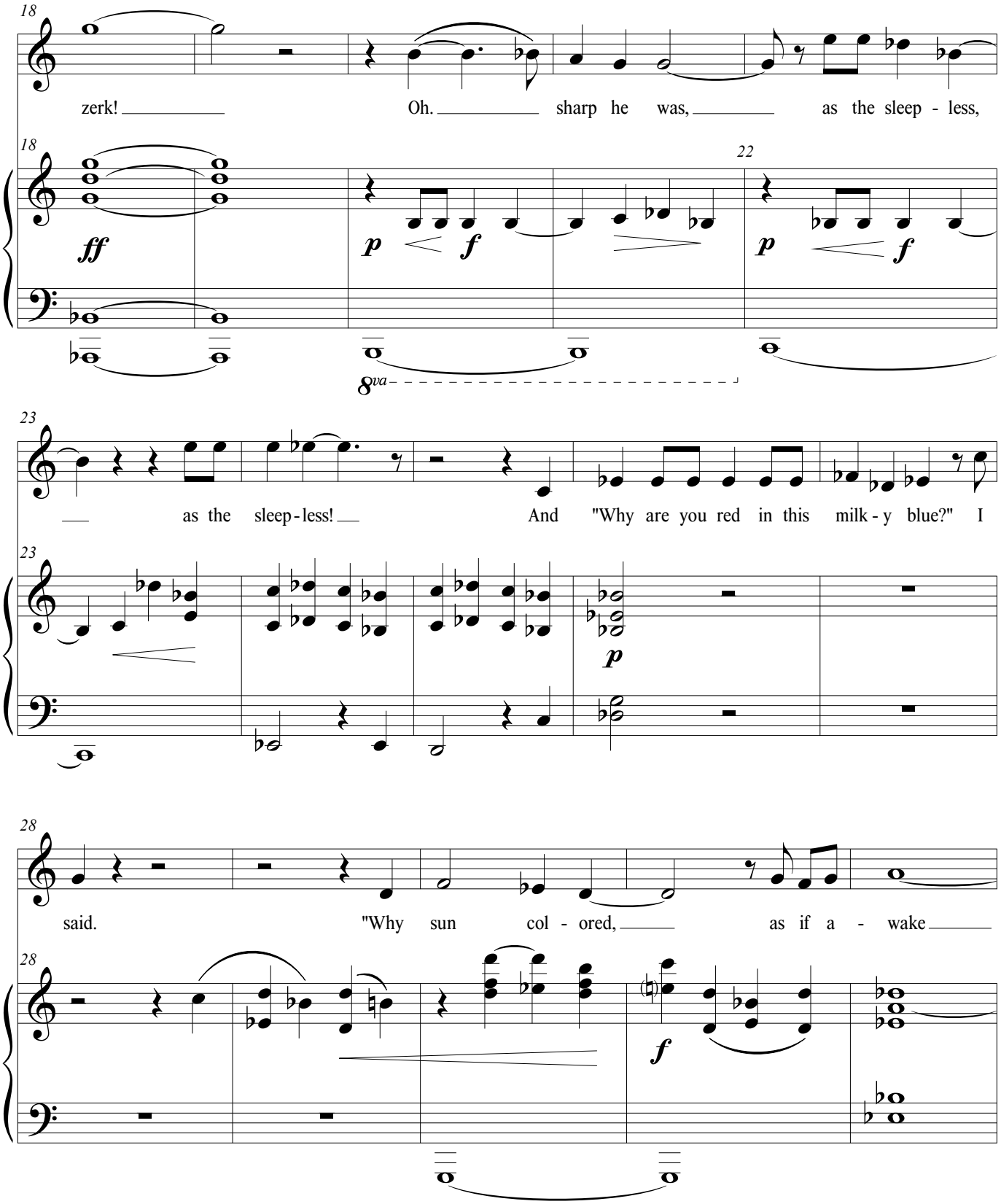
Written voice range: C4 - G5
Tessitura: D4 - E5
Duration 3:30

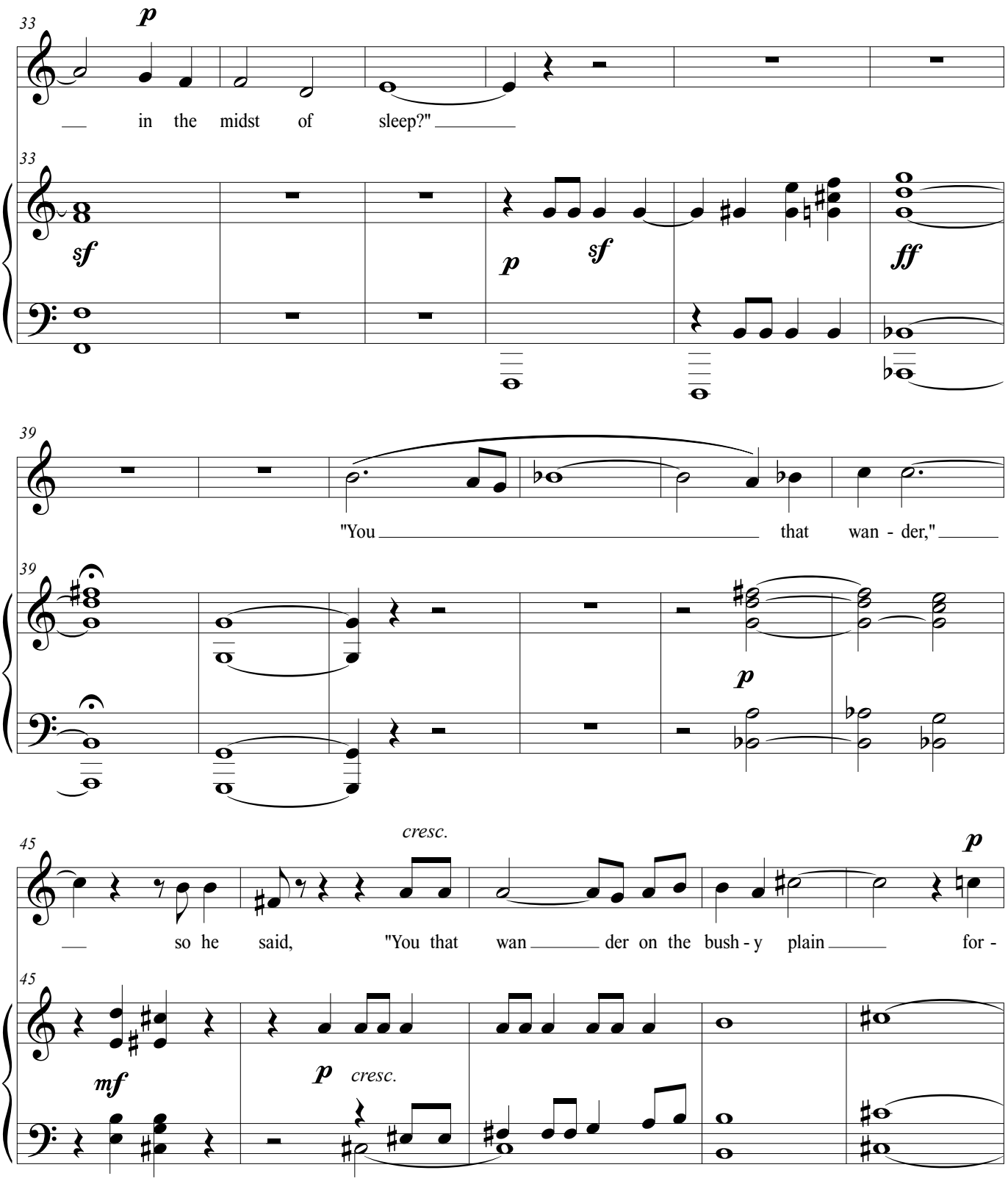
Composed 2019

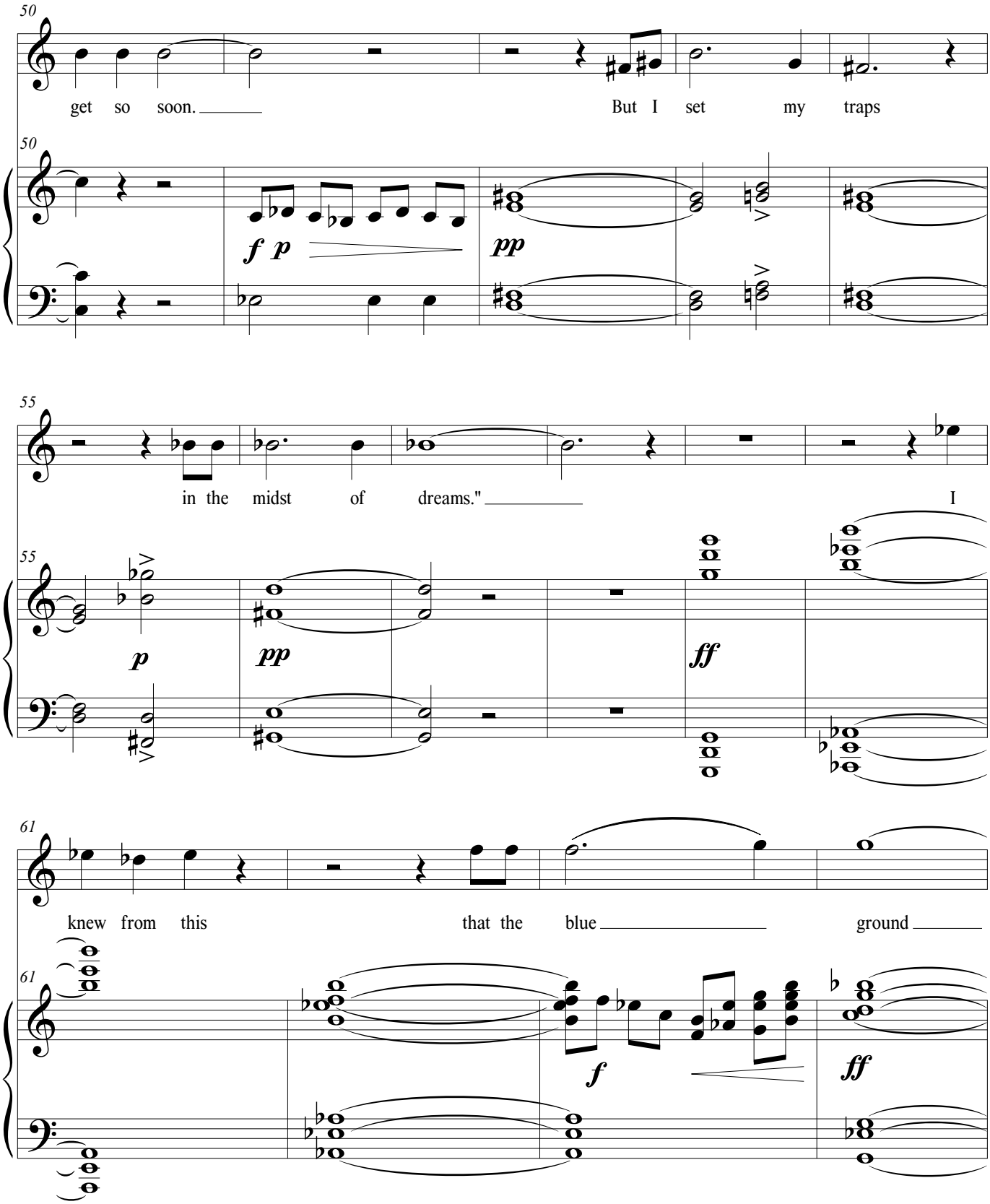
Anecdote of the Prince of Peacocks

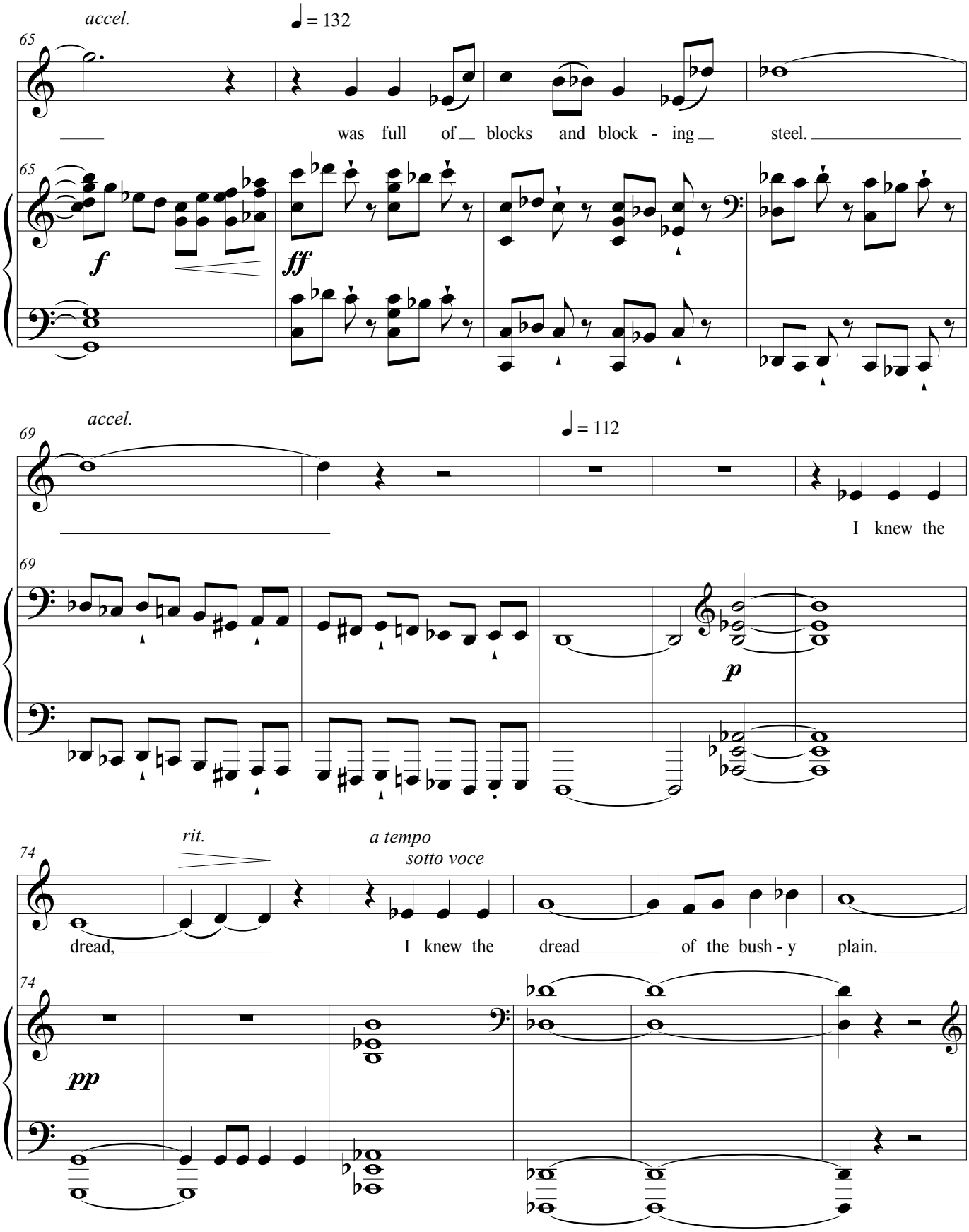
Lawrence Kramer

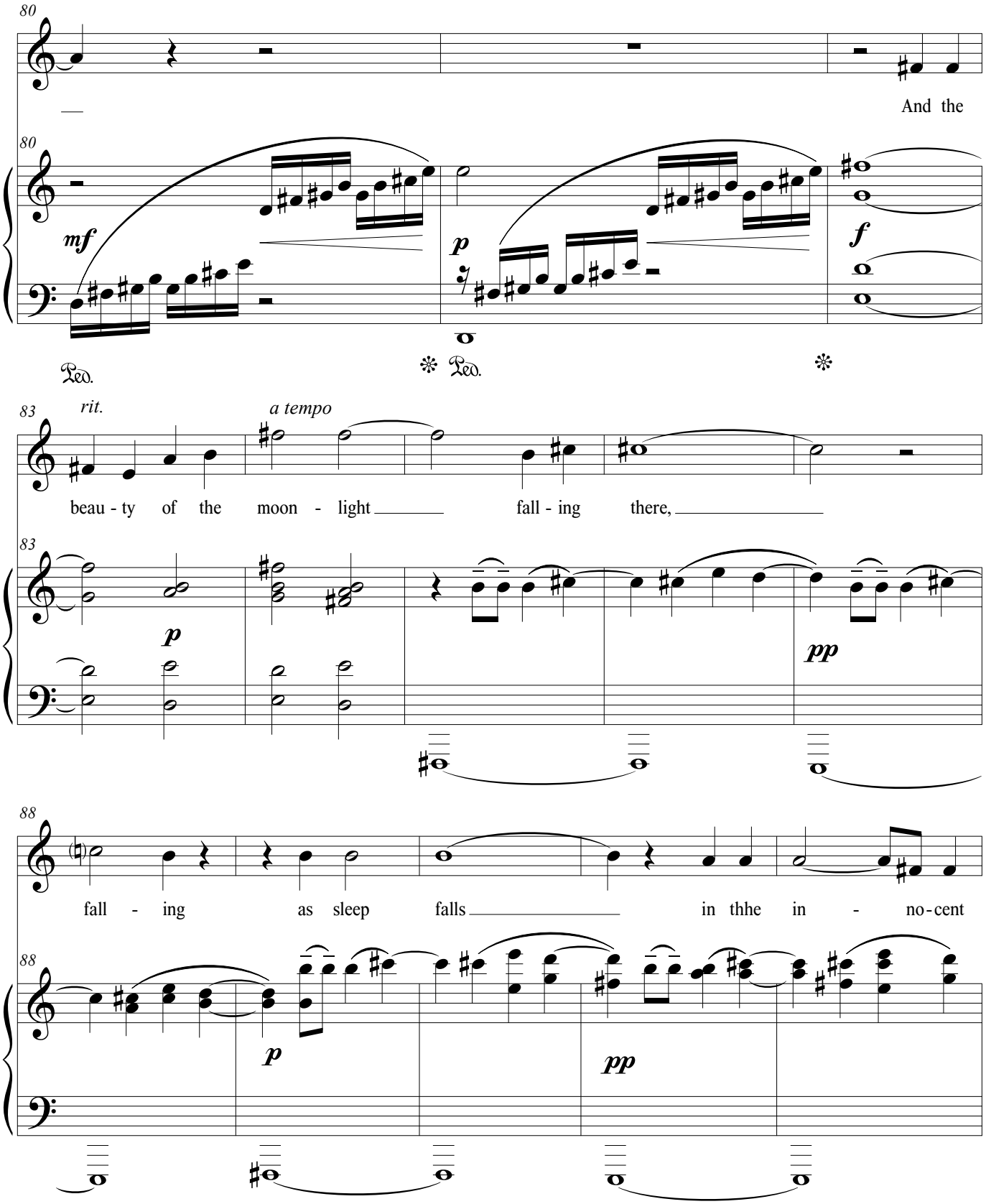


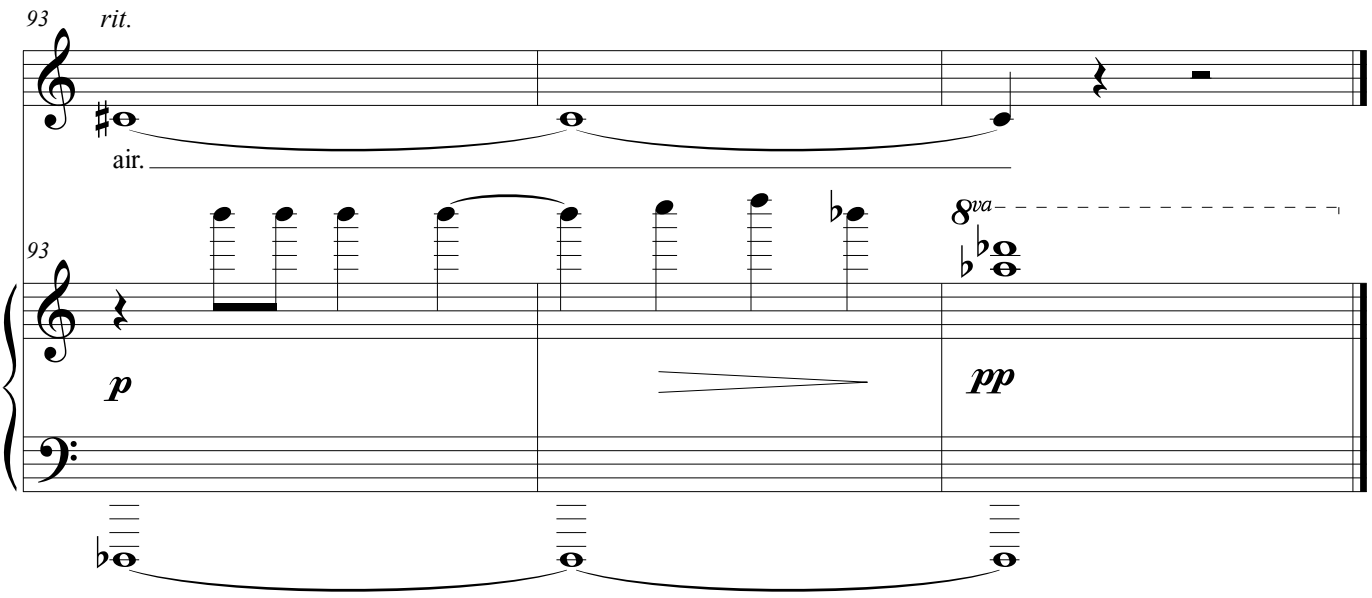

18
zerk!
Oh.
sharp he was,
as the sleep - less,
ff
p
f
22
8va
23
as the sleep-less!
And "Why are you red in this milk - y blue?" I
28
said.
"Why sun col - ored,
as if a - wake


33
p
in the midst of sleep?"
33
sf
p
sf
ff
39
"You that wan - der,"
39
p
45
cresc.
p
so he said, "You that wan der on the bush - y plain for -
45
mf
p
cresc.


50
get so soon. But I set my traps
50
f p
pp
55
in the midst of dreams." I
55
p
pp
ff
61
knew from this that the blue ground
61
f
ff


accel.
♩ = 132
65
was full of blocks and block - ing steel.
f
ff
accel.
♩ = 112
69
I knew the
p
rit.
a tempo
sotto voce
74
dread, I knew the dread of the bush - y plain.
pp


80
And the
mf
p
f
Ped.
Ped.
83
rit.
a tempo
beau - ty of the moon - light fall - ing there,
p
pp
88
fall - ing as sleep falls in thhe in - no-cent
p
pp


93
rit.
air.
93
8va
p
pp

Another Fan

High Voice

Dreamer, that I may plunge
In pathless pure delight
Contrive by a subtle lie
To keep my wing in your hand.

A freshness of twilight
Comes to you with each beat
Whose imprisoned stroke makes
The horizon delicately retreat.

Vertigo! See how space quivers
Like a vast kiss that,
Mad to be born for no one,
Can neither spill out nor be stilled.

Do you feel the fierce paradise
That like muffled laughter
Pours from the corner of your mouth
To the depths of the uniform fold?

The scepter of shores of rose
Inert on evenings of gold, it's this,
This white closed flight you pose
Against the bracelet's fire.

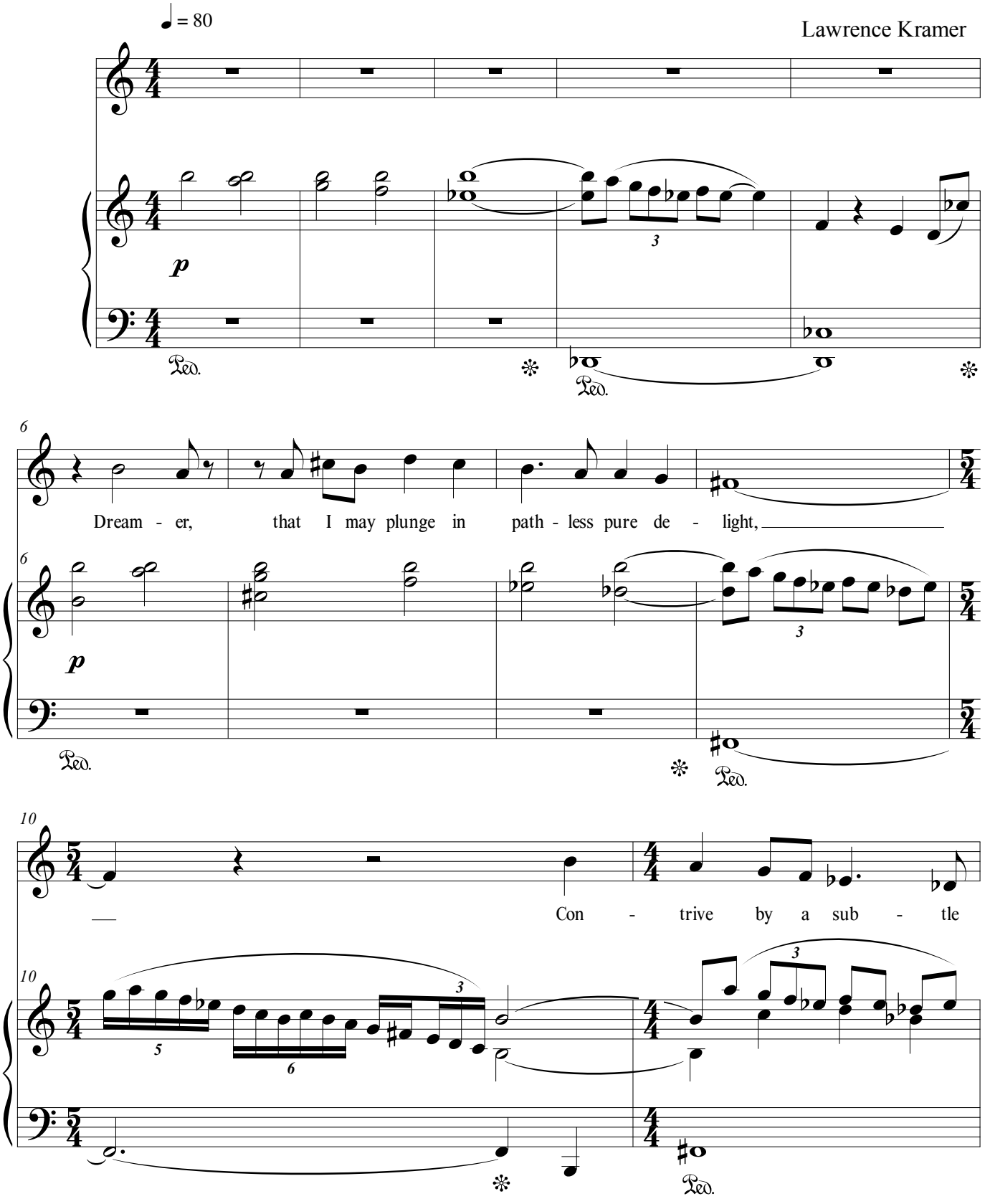
--Stéphane Mallarmé

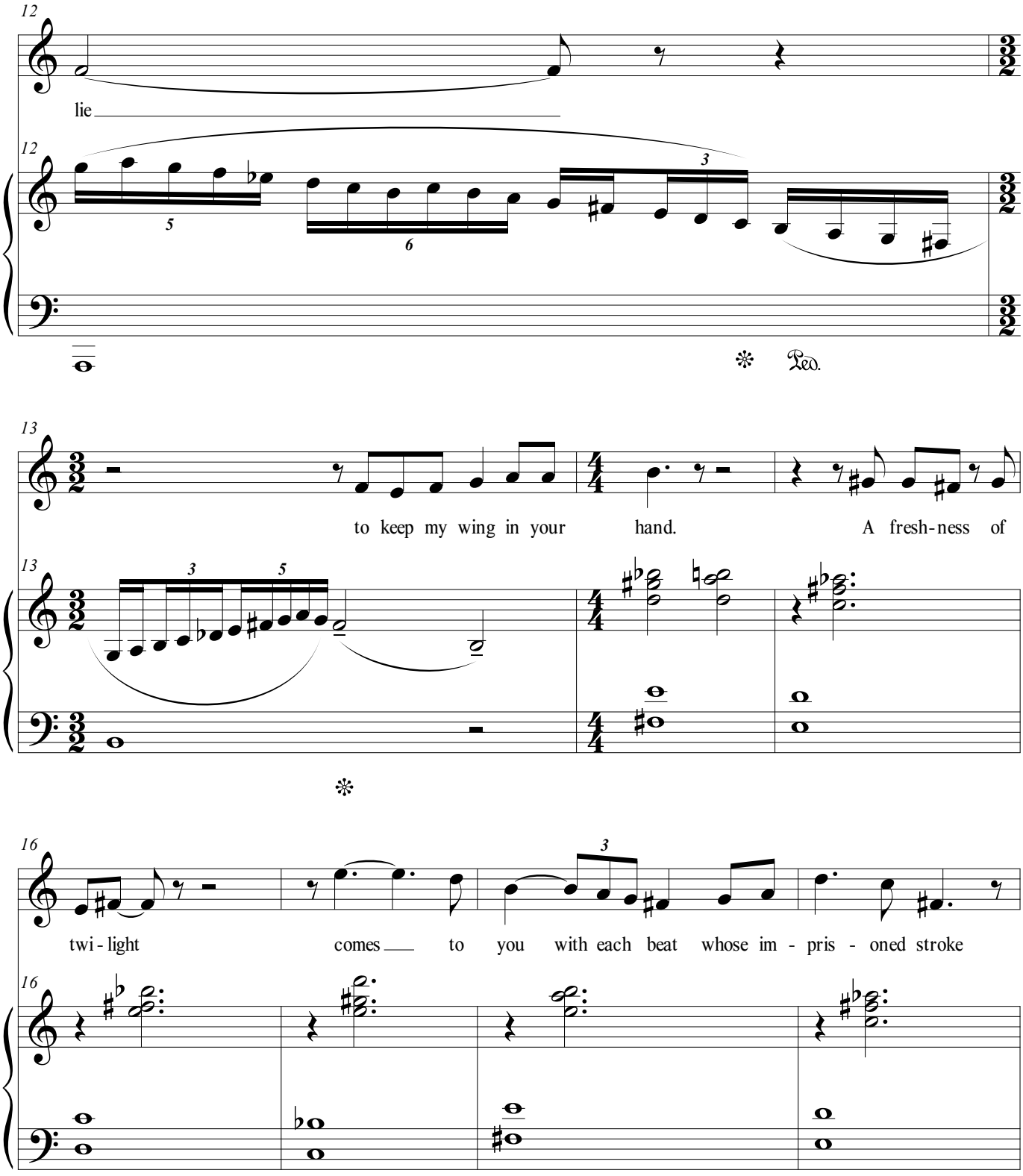
(Translation by the composer.)

Written voice range: C4 - A5
Tessitura: F4 - E♭5
Duration 3:45

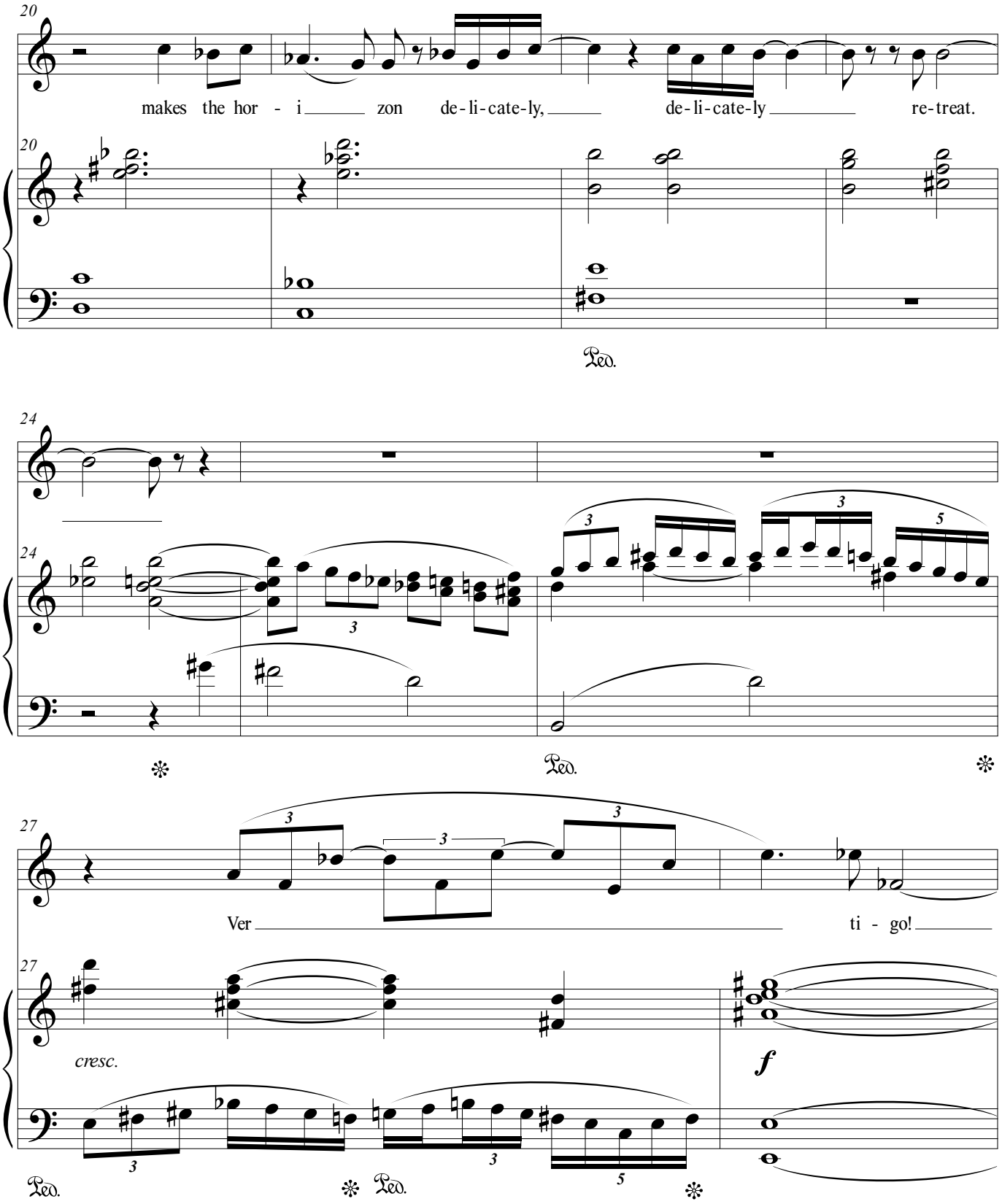
Composed 2020

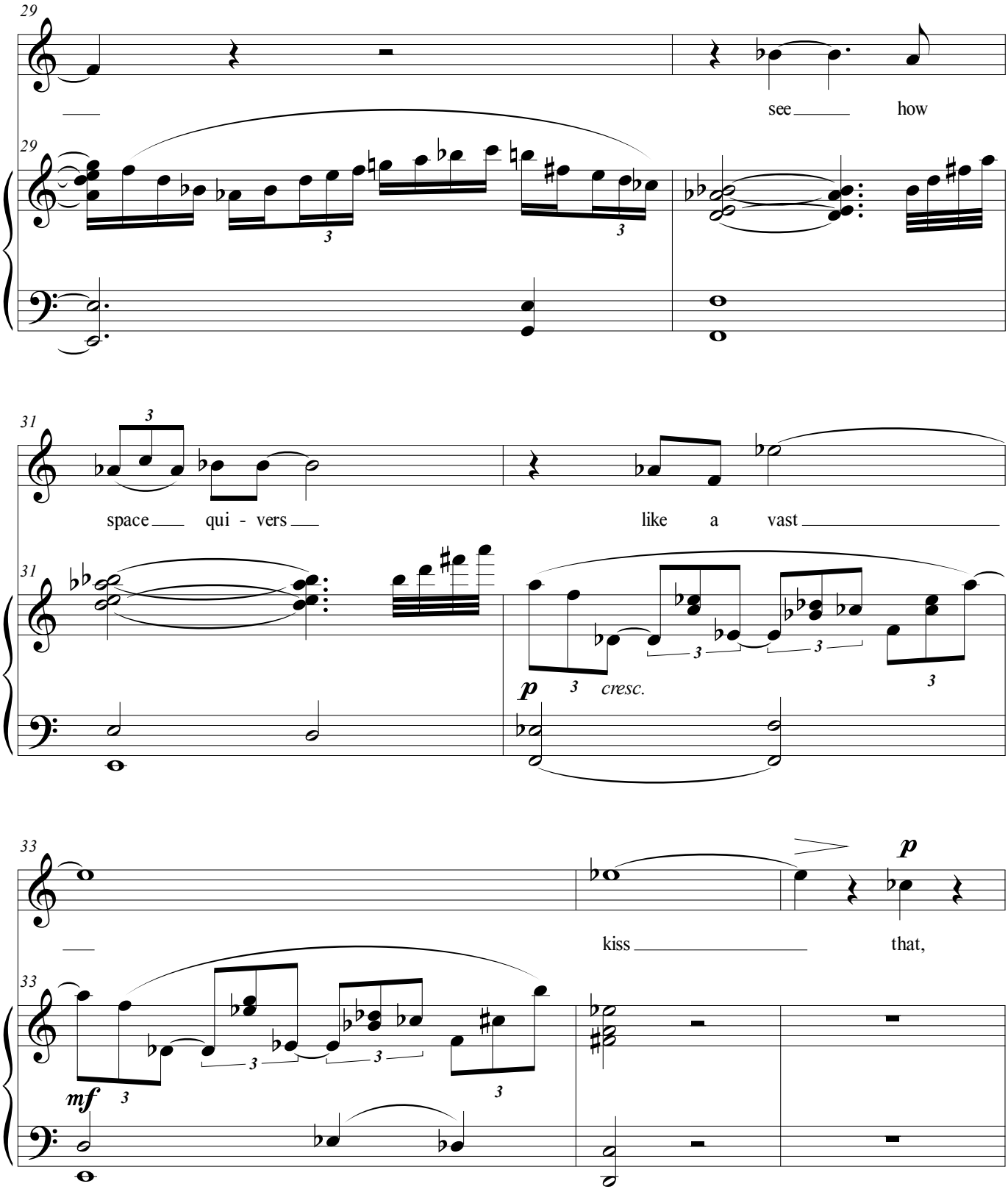
Another Fan

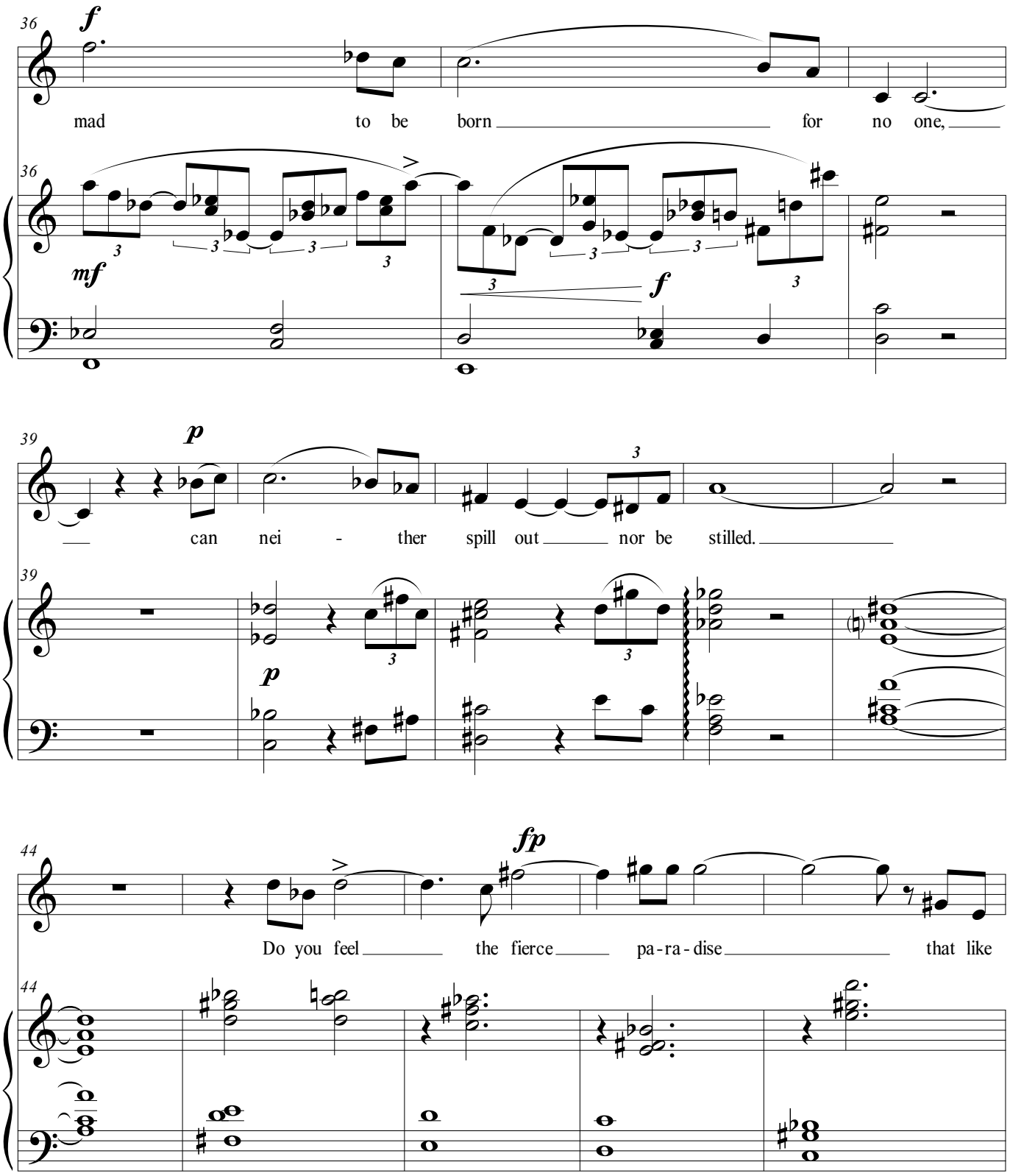

♩ = 80
Lawrence Kramer
p
Ped.
6
Dream - er, that I may plunge in path - less pure de - light,
10
Con - trive by a sub - tle

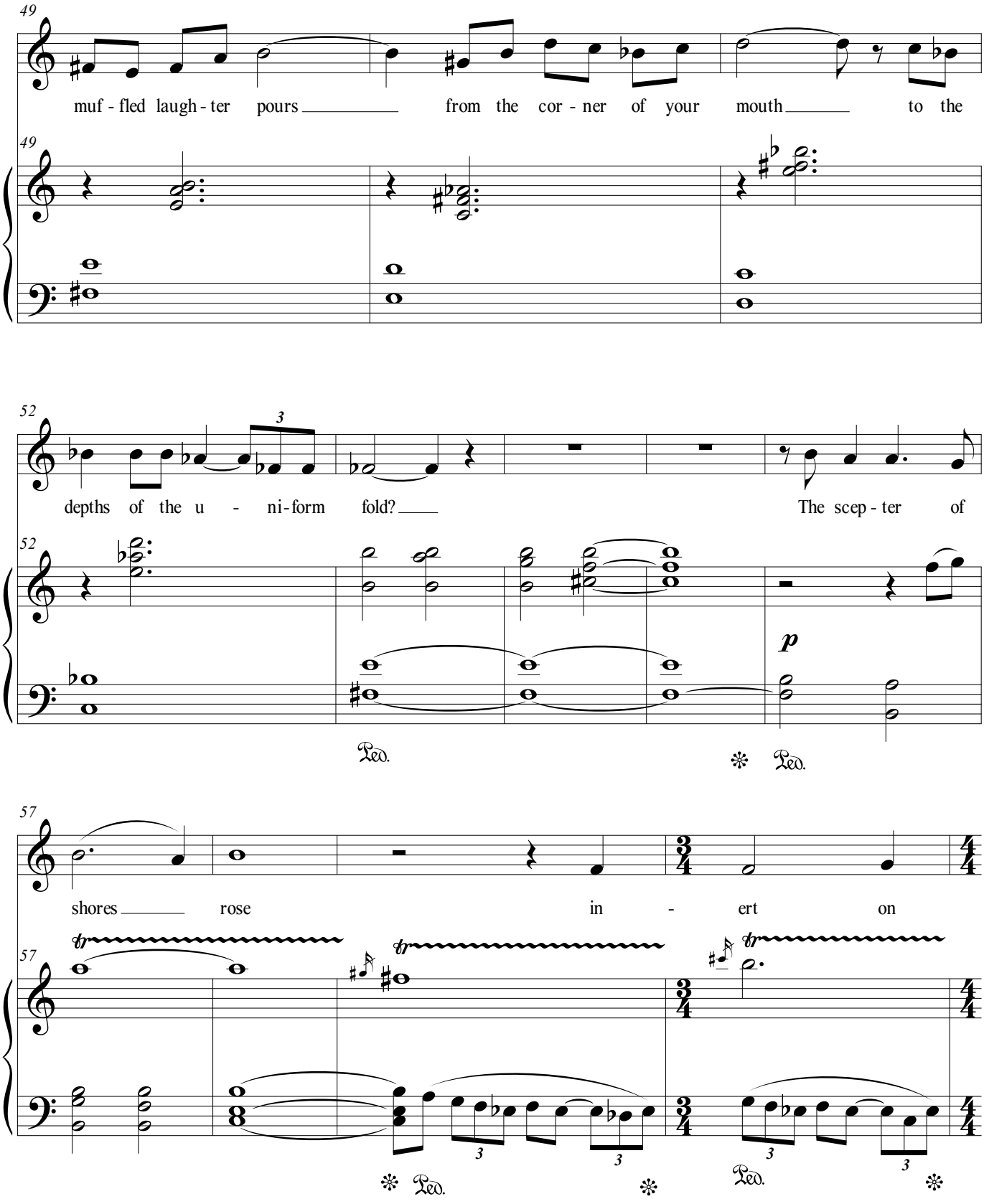

12
lie
12
3
5
6
Ped.
13
to keep my wing in your hand. A fresh-ness of
13
3
5
16
twi - light comes to you with each beat whose im - pris - oned stroke
16

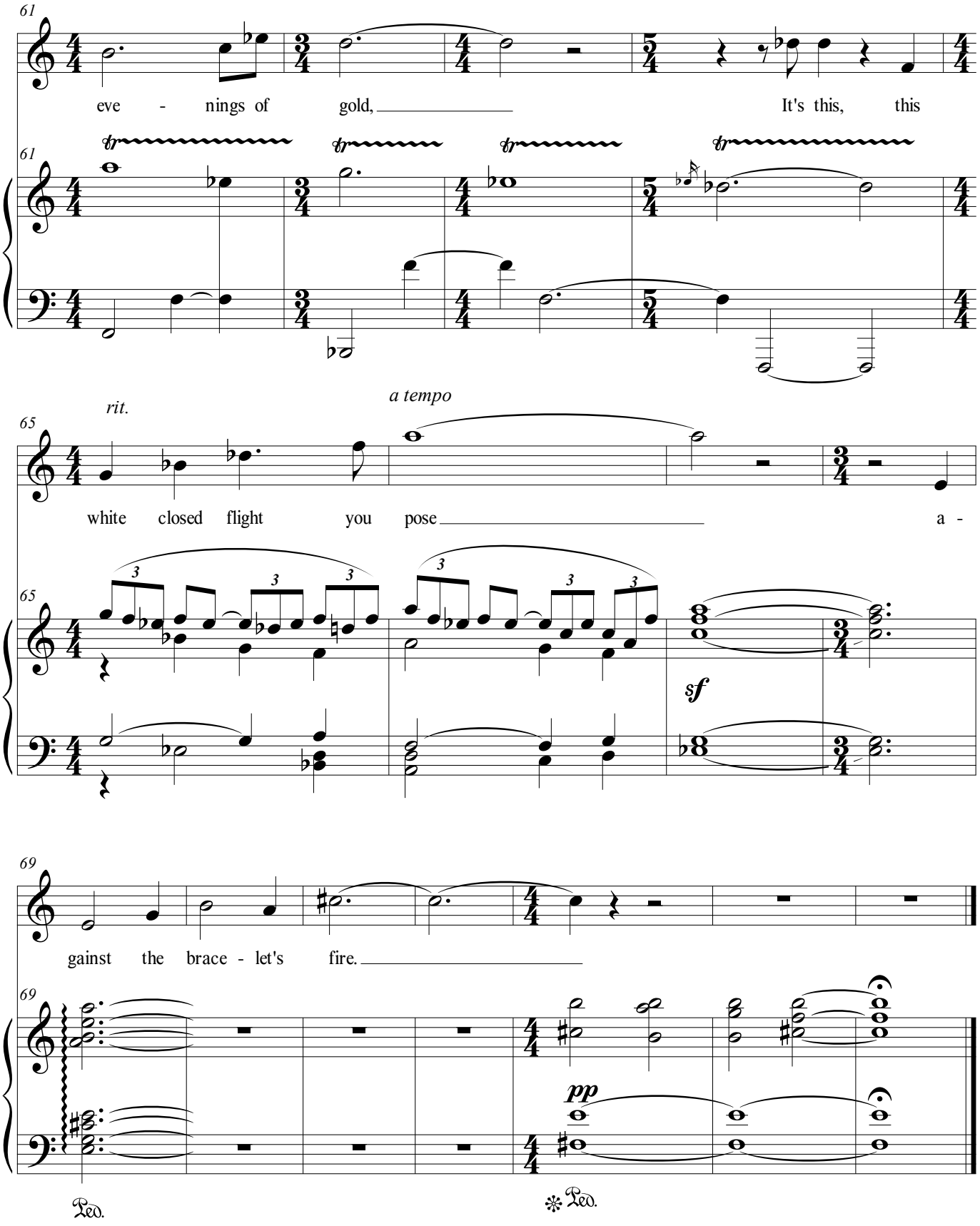
3 5


20
makes the hor - i zon de-li-cate-ly, de-li-cate-ly re-treat.
Ped.
24
Ped.
27
Ver ti - go!
cresc.
f
Ped.
Ped.


29
see how
29
31
space qui - vers
like a vast
31
p
cresc.
33
kiss that,
33
mf
p


36
f
mad to be born for no one,
36
mf
f
39
p
can nei - ther spill out nor be stilled.
39
p
44
fp
Do you feel the fierce pa-ra-dise that like
44


49
muf - fled laugh - ter pours from the cor - ner of your mouth to the
49
52
3
depths of the u - ni-form fold? The scep - ter of
52
p
Ped.
Ped.
57
shores rose in - ert on
57
tr
tr
tr
3
3
3
Ped.
Ped.


61
eve - nings of gold, It's this, this
61
rit.
a tempo
65
white closed flight you pose a -
65
sf
69
gainst the brace - let's fire.
69
pp
Ped.
Ped.

Autumn Rain

High Voice

There trudges one to a merry-making
With a sturdy swing,
On whom the rain comes down.

To fetch the saving medicament
Is another bent,
On whom the rain comes down.

One slowly drives his herd to the stall
Ere ill befall,
On whom the rain comes down.

This bears his missives of life and death
With quickening breath,
On whom the rain comes down.

One watches for signals of wreck or war
From the hill afar,
On whom the rain comes down.

No care if he gain a shelter or none,
Unhired moves one,
On whom the rain comes down.

And another knows nought of its chilling fall
Upon him at all,
On whom the rain comes down.

--Thomas Hardy

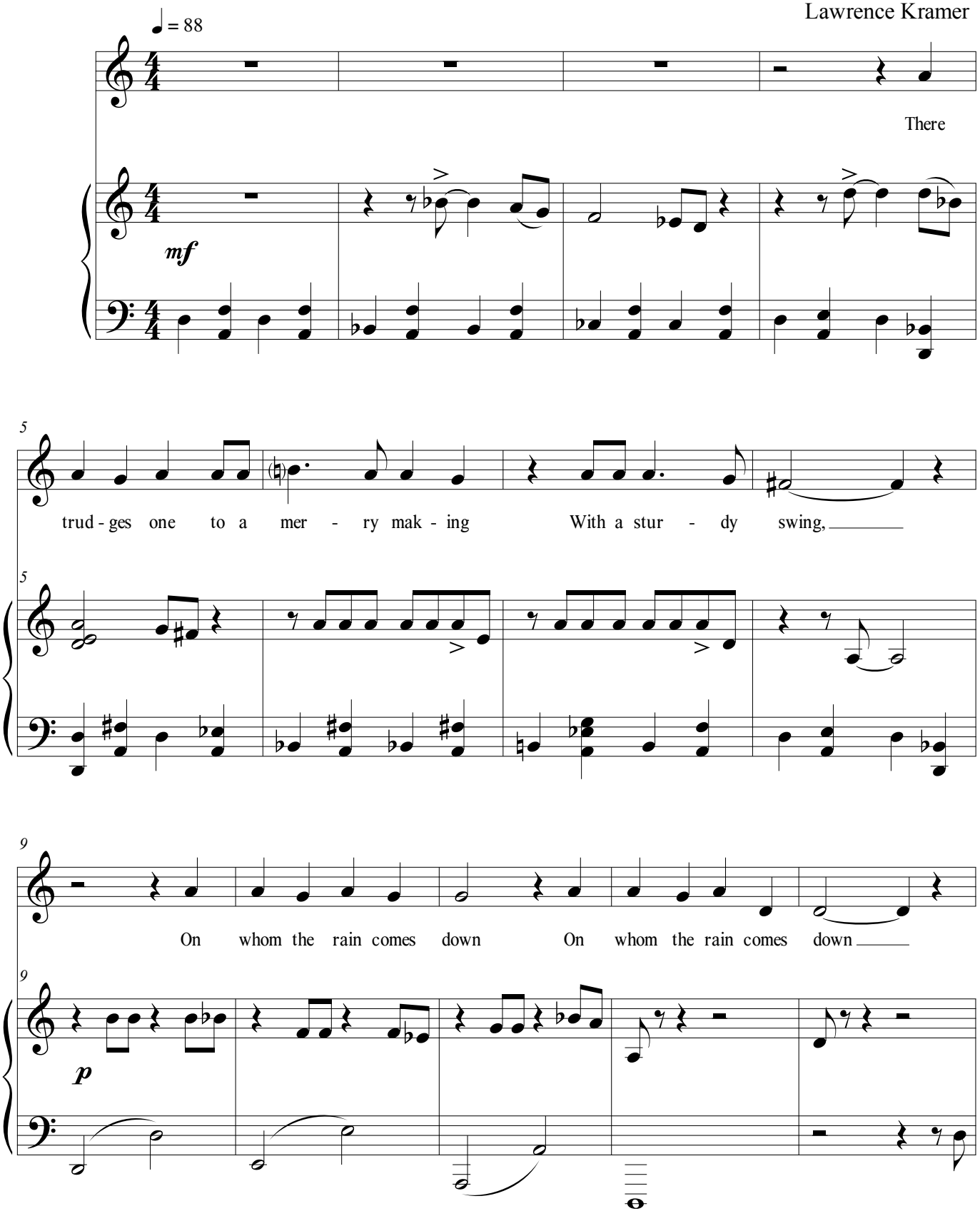
Written voice range: D4 - F5
Tessitura: F4 - D5
Duration: 4 minutes.

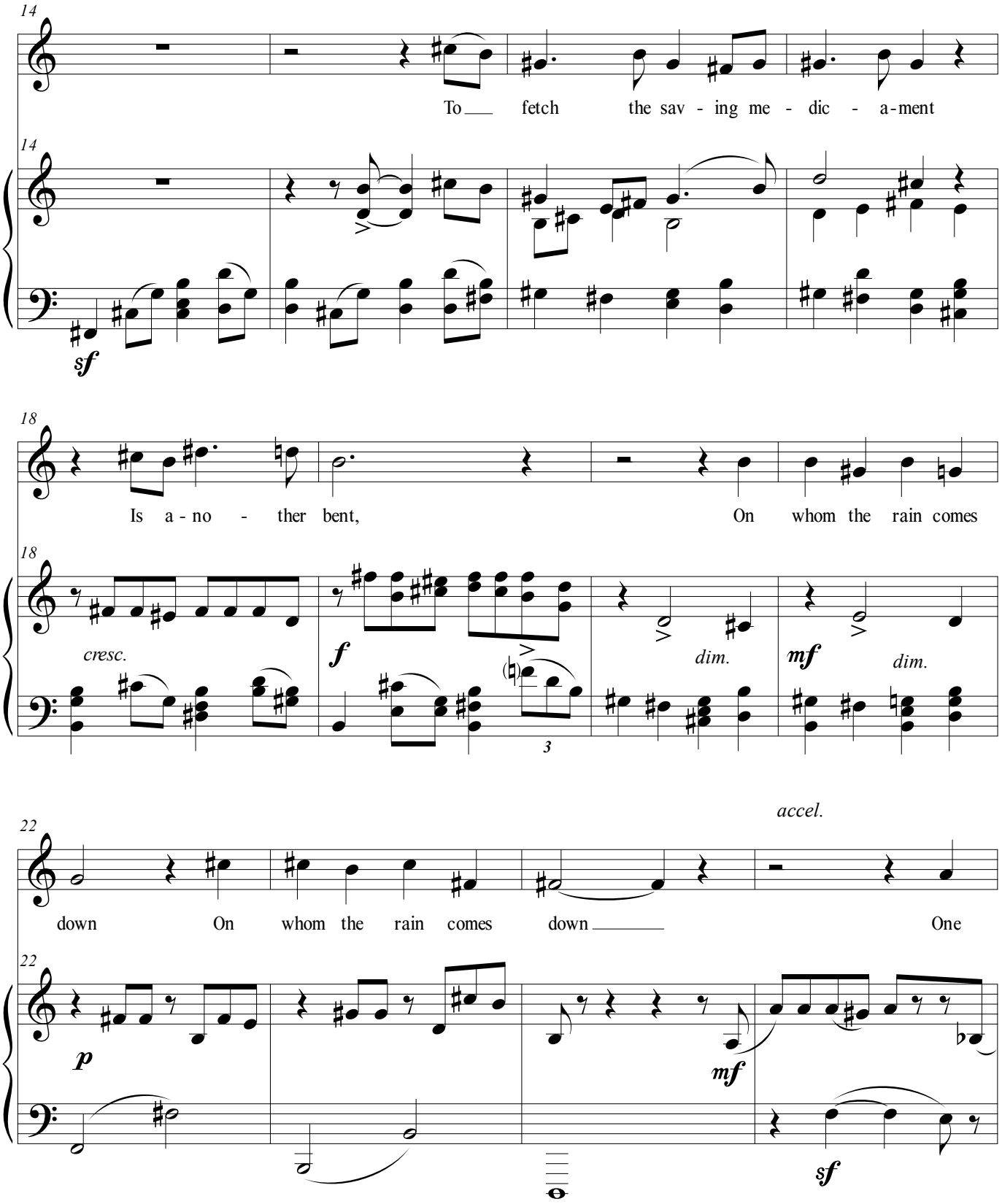
Composed 2020

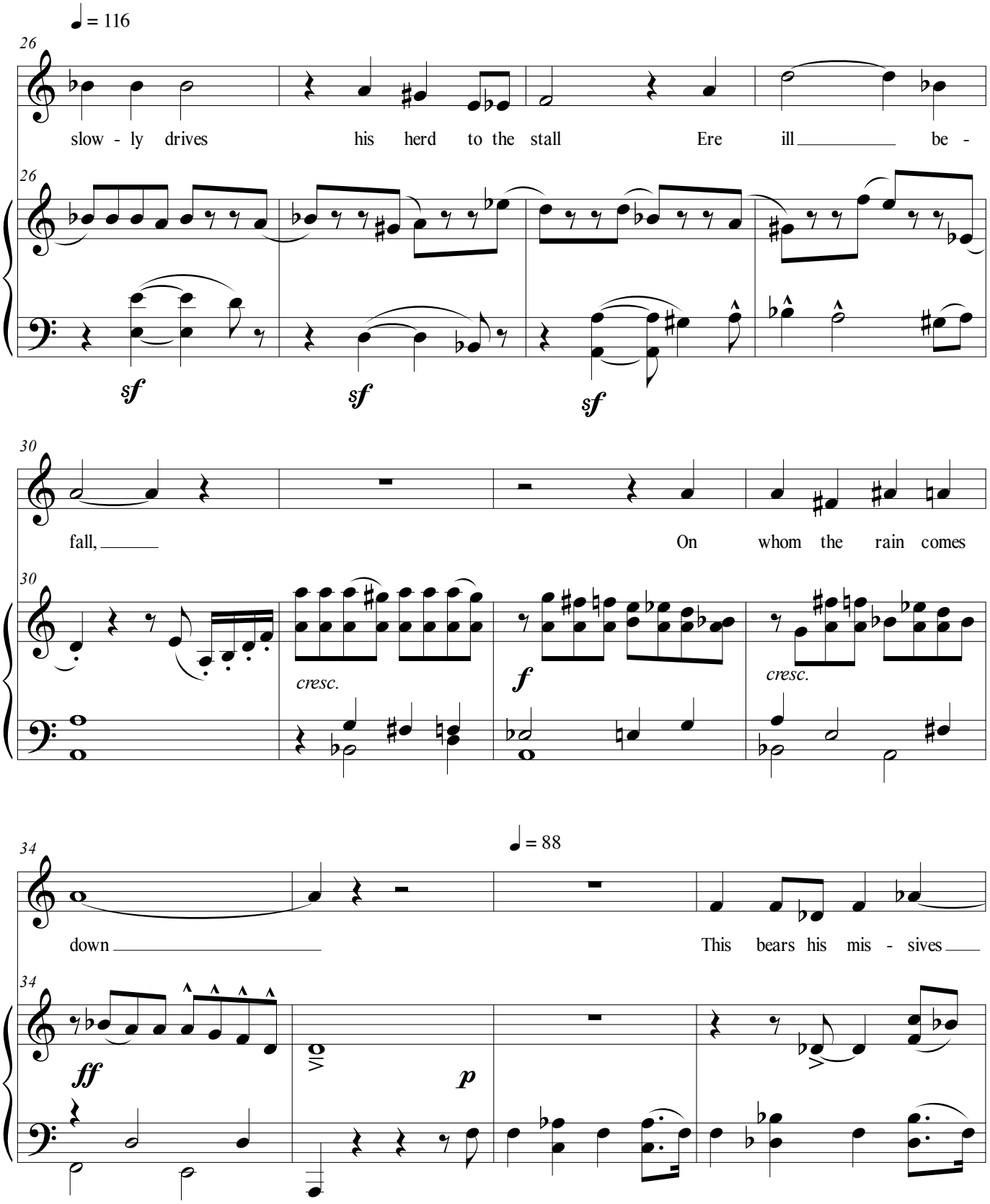
Autumn Rain

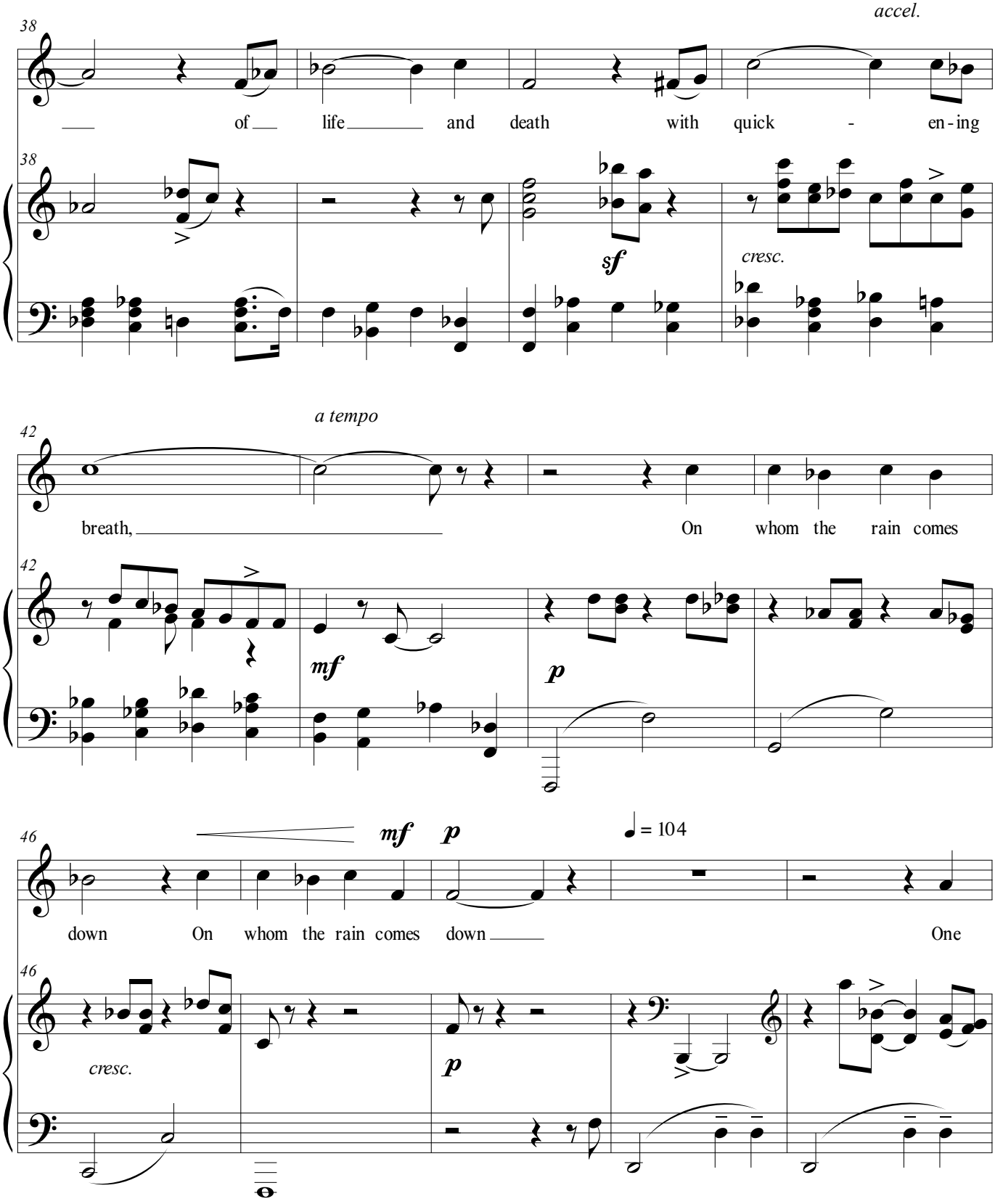
Like an old ballad.

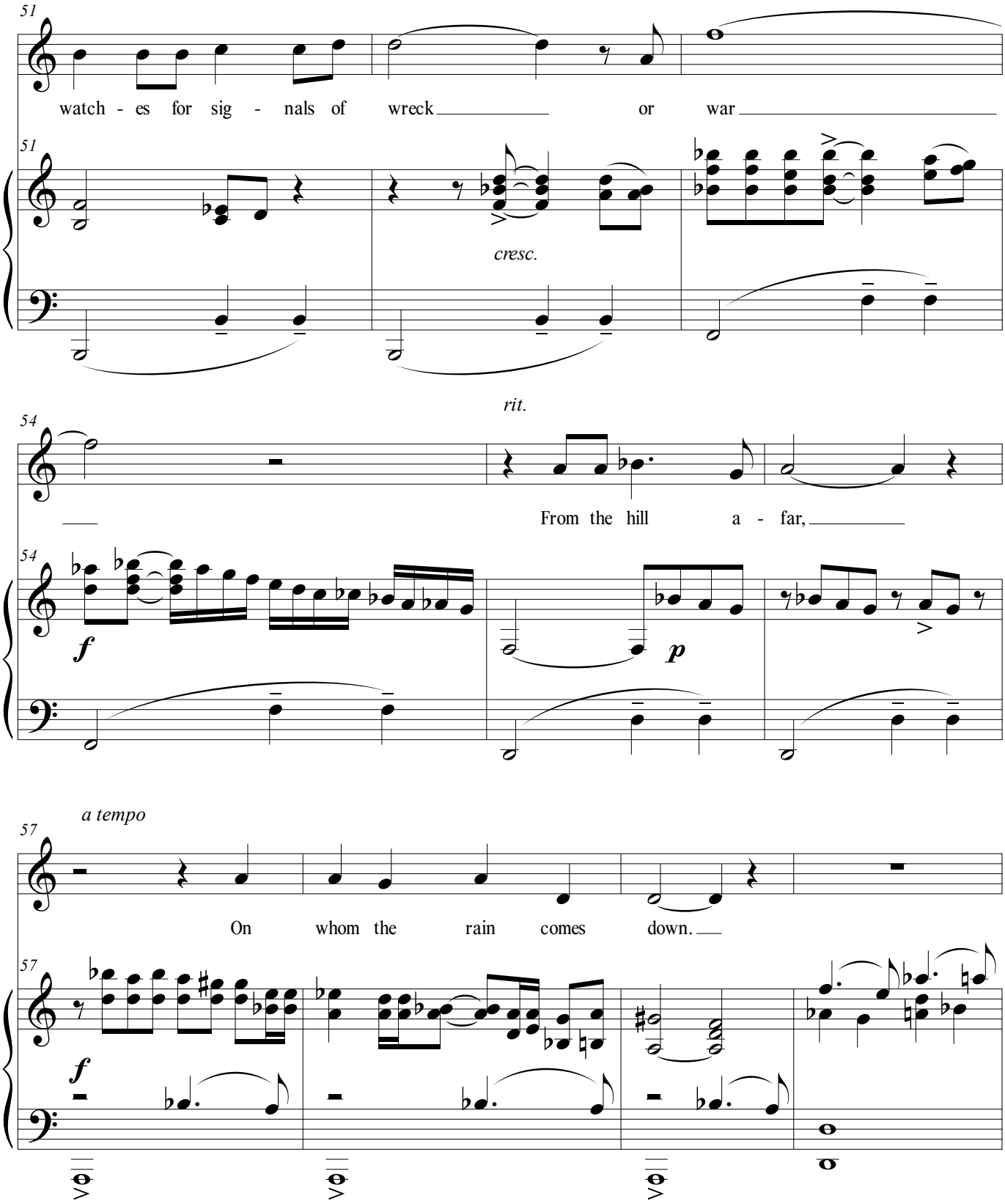
Lawrence Kramer

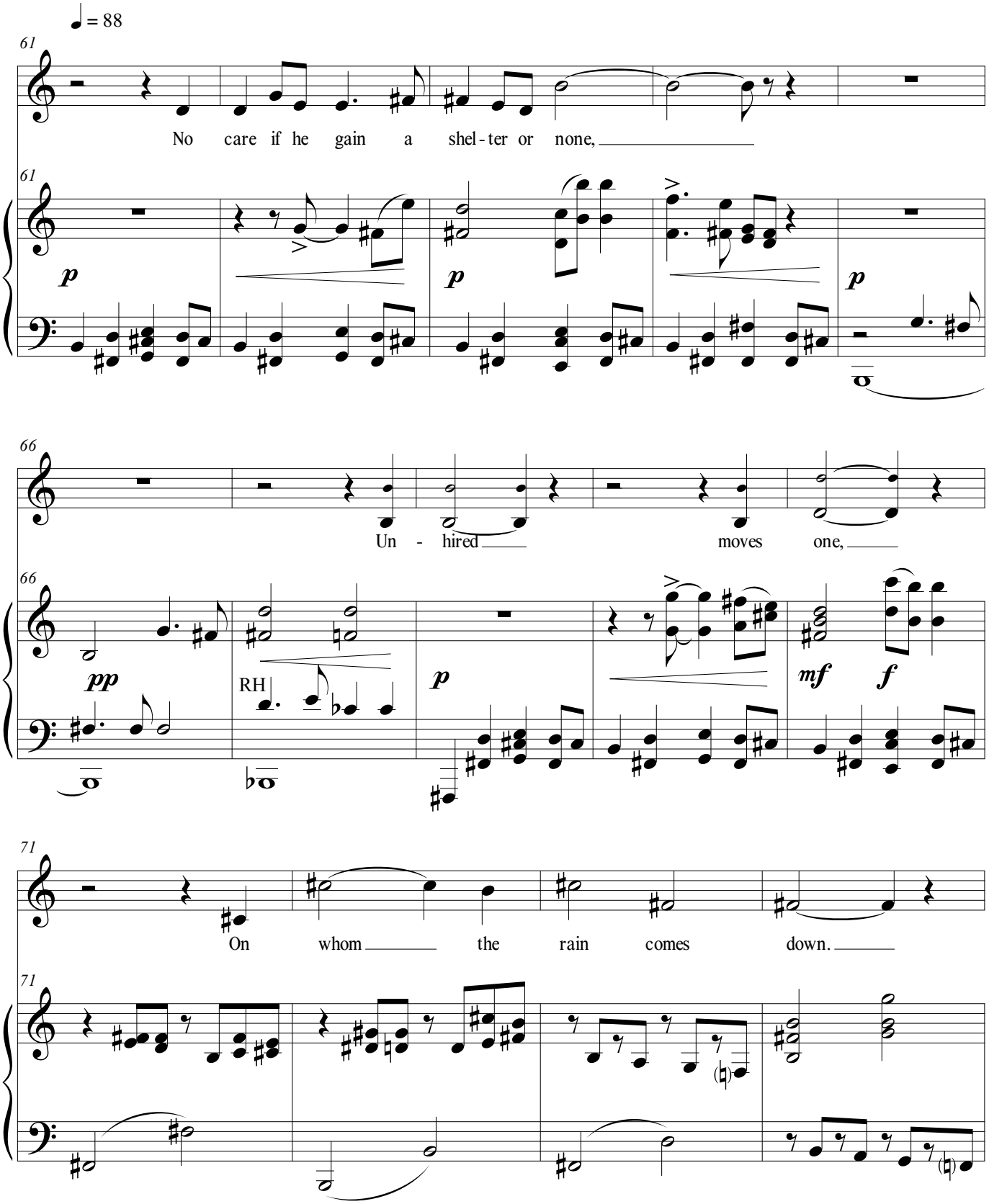


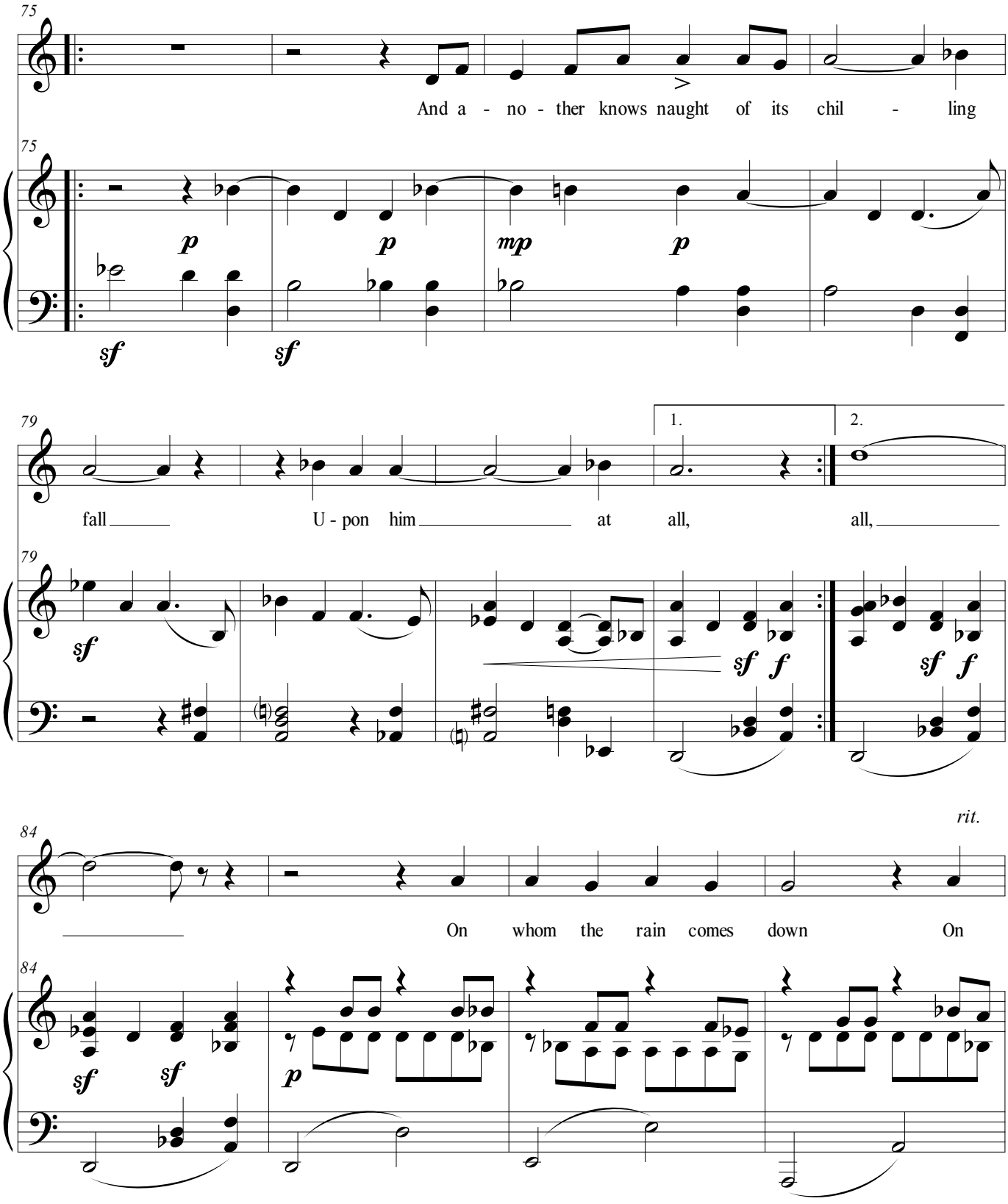

14
To fetch the sav - ing me - dic - a-ment
14
sf
18
Is a - no - ther bent, On whom the rain comes
18
cresc.
f
dim.
mf
dim.
3
accel.
22
down On whom the rain comes down One
22
p
mf
sf

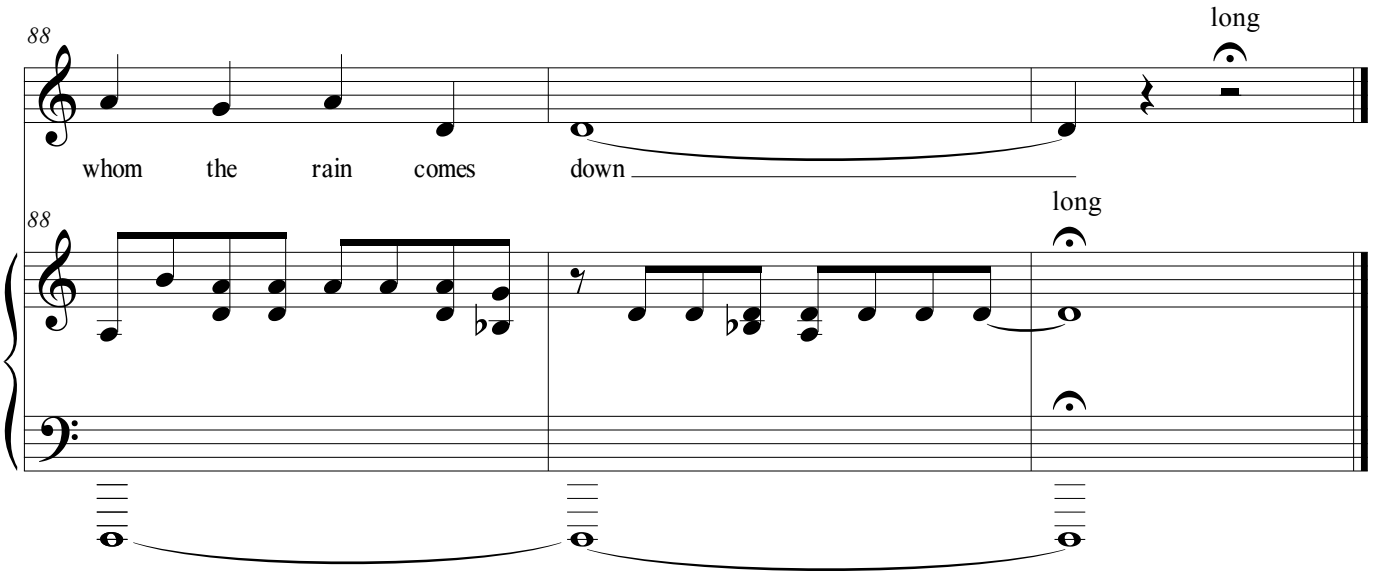

♩ = 116
26
slow - ly drives his herd to the stall Ere ill be -
sf
sf
sf
30
fall, On whom the rain comes
cresc.
f
cresc.
34
♩ = 88
down This bears his mis - sives
ff
p


accel.
38
of life and death with quick - en - ing
sf
cresc.
a tempo
42
breath, On whom the rain comes
mf
p
46
mf p
♩ = 104
down On whom the rain comes down One
cresc.
p


51
watch - es for sig - nals of wreck or war
51
cresc.
rit.
54
From the hill a - far,
54
f
p
a tempo
57
On whom the rain comes down.
57
f


♩ = 88
61
No care if he gain a shel - ter or none,
61
p
p
p
66
Un - hired moves one,
66
pp
RH
p
mf
f
71
On whom the rain comes down.
71


75
And a - no - ther knows naught of its chil - ling
p p mp p
sf sf
79
fall U - pon him at all, all,
1.
2.
sf
sf f
sf f
84
rit.
On whom the rain comes down On
sf sf
p


88
long
whom the rain comes down
88
long

Candle and Thorn

High Voice

The Moods

Time drops in decay,
Like a candle burnt out,
And the mountains and woods
Have their day, have their day;
What one in the rout
Of the fire-born moods
Has fallen away?

The Old Men Admiring Themselves in the Water

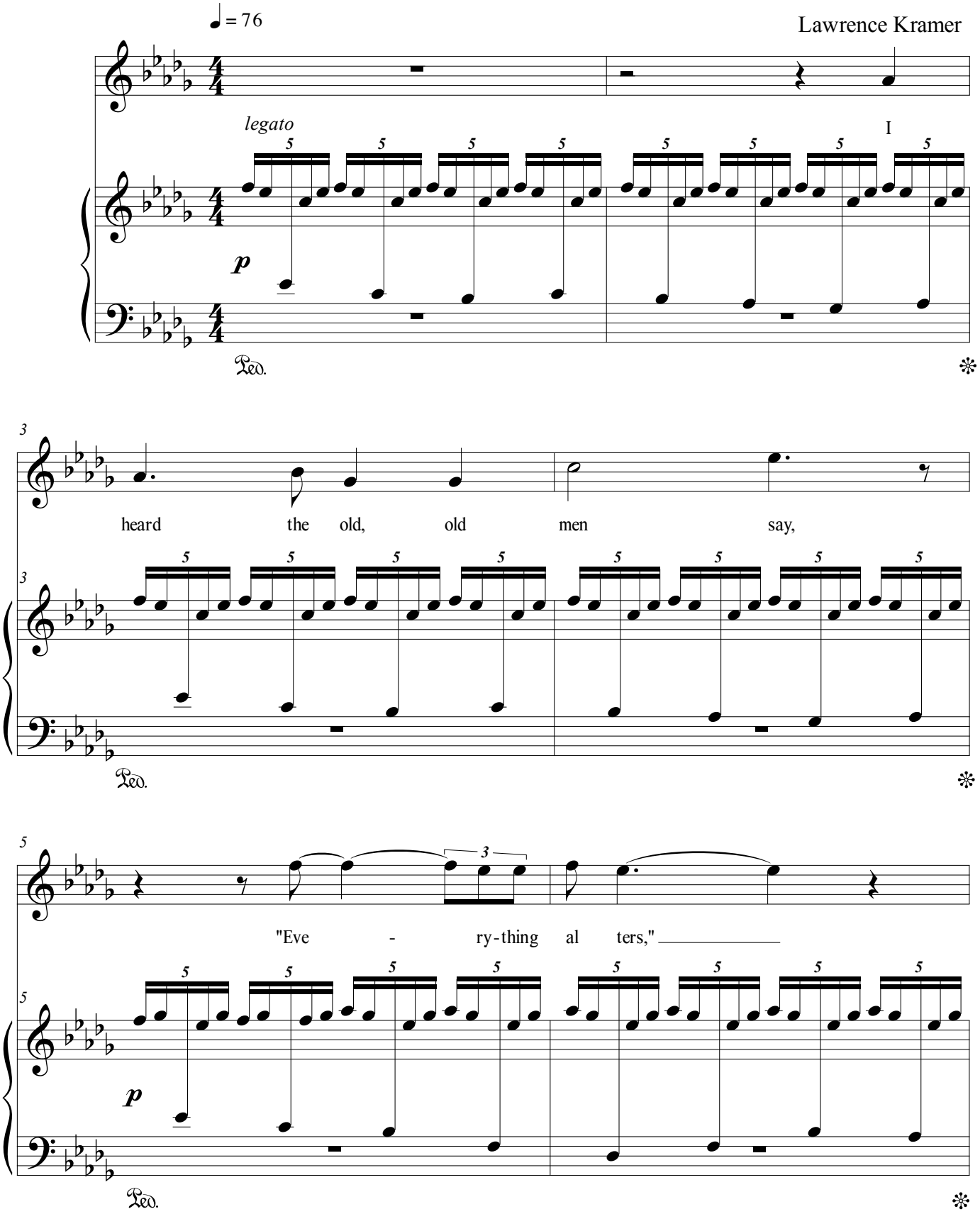
I heard the old, old men say,
"Everything alters,
And one by one we drop away."
They had hands like claws, and their knees
Were twisted like the old thorn-trees
By the waters.
I heard the old, old men say,
"All that's beautiful drifts away
Like the waters."

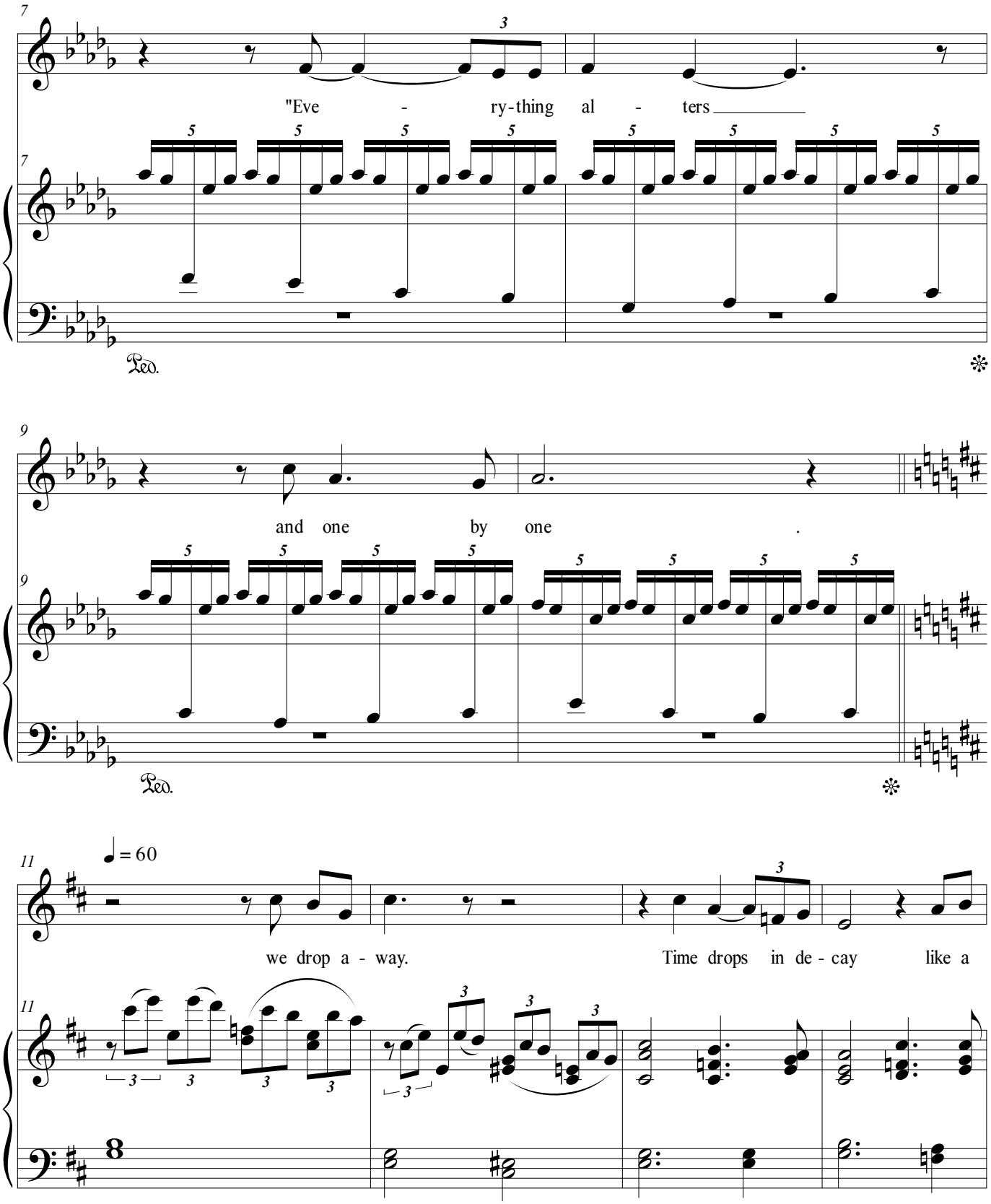
Candle and Thorn takes its title from key images in the two poems by W. B. Yeats that the composition sets to music in a single movement. The poems are reflections on lost time and old age, topics that famously preoccupied Yeats from his earliest youth. The setting interweaves and fragments the two texts so that they comment on each other and at the same time dissolve each other, thus enacting what the second of the poems describes: the utterances drift away--and, this being poetry and becoming music, they arrive and acquire form precisely by doing so.

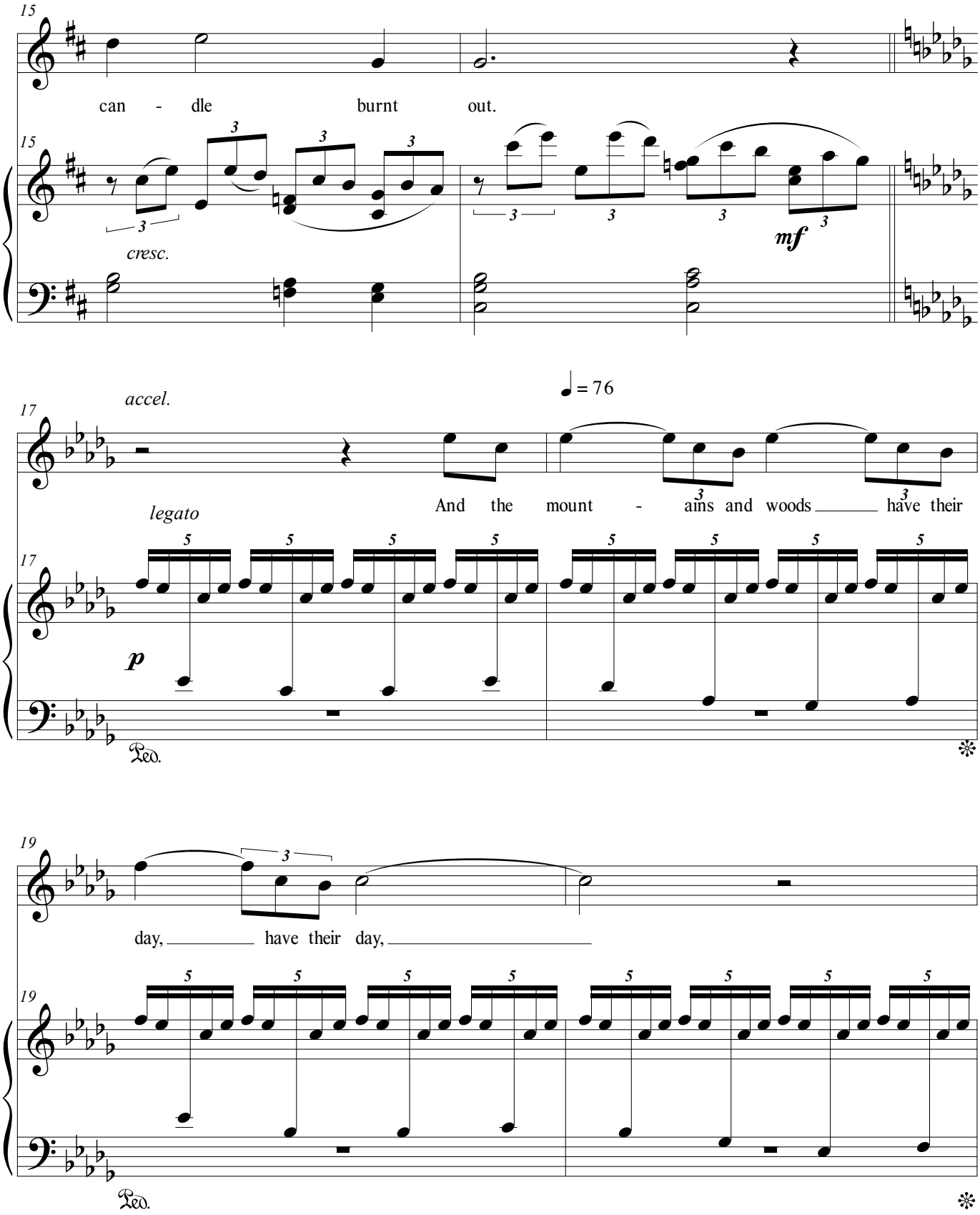
Written voice range: C4 - G♯5.
Tessitura: F4 - F5
Duration: 6.5 minutes.

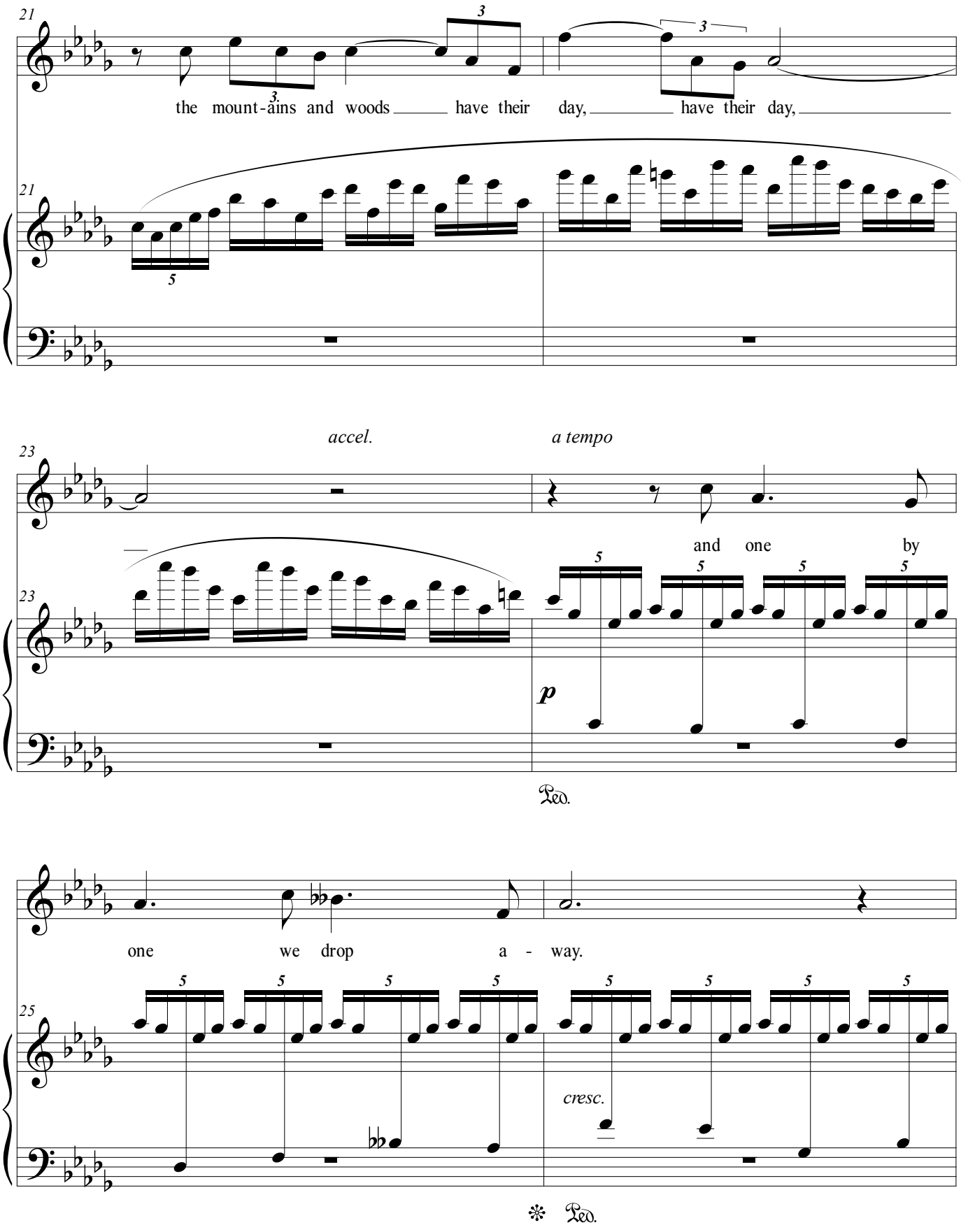
Composed 2016

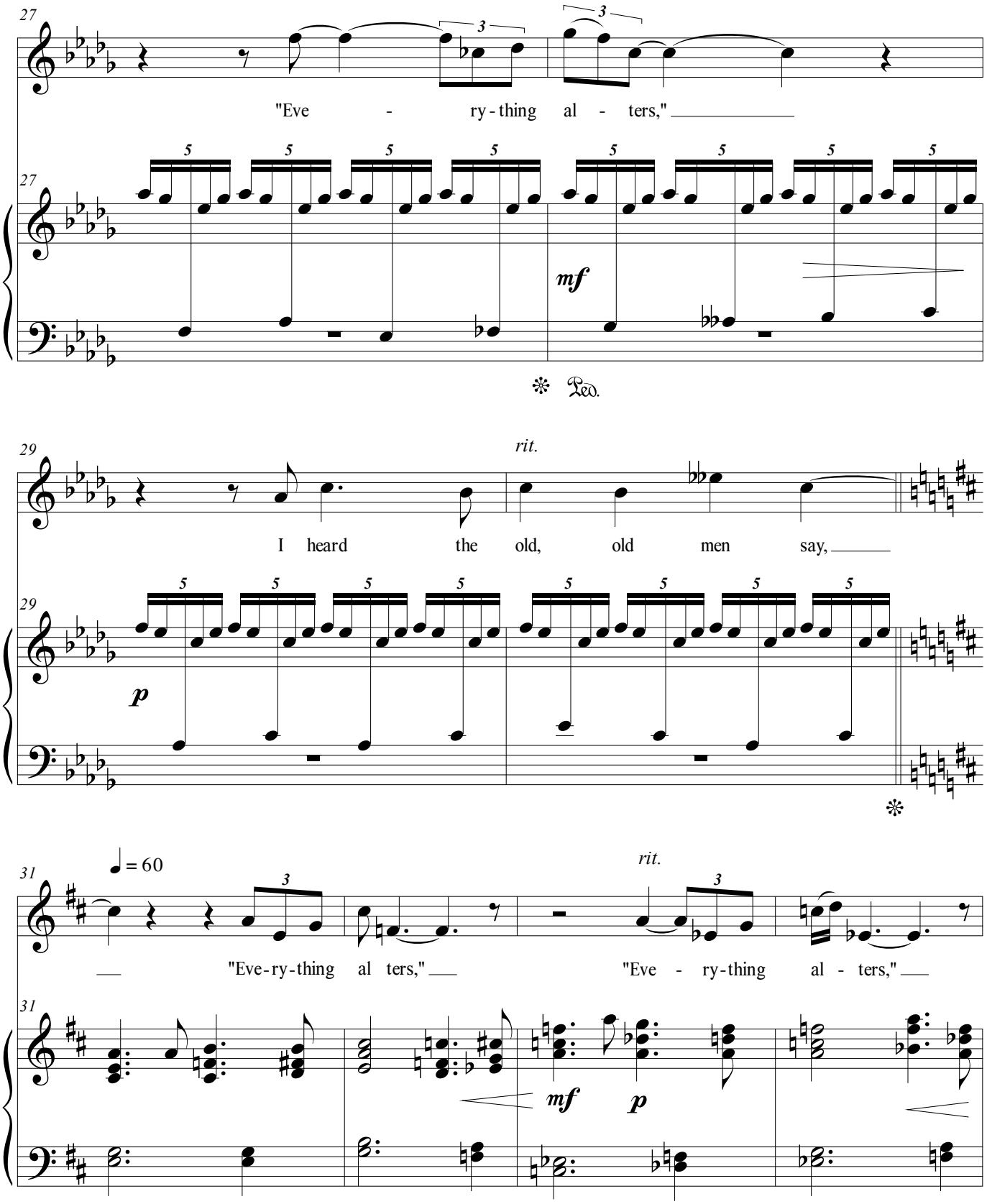
Candle and Thorn

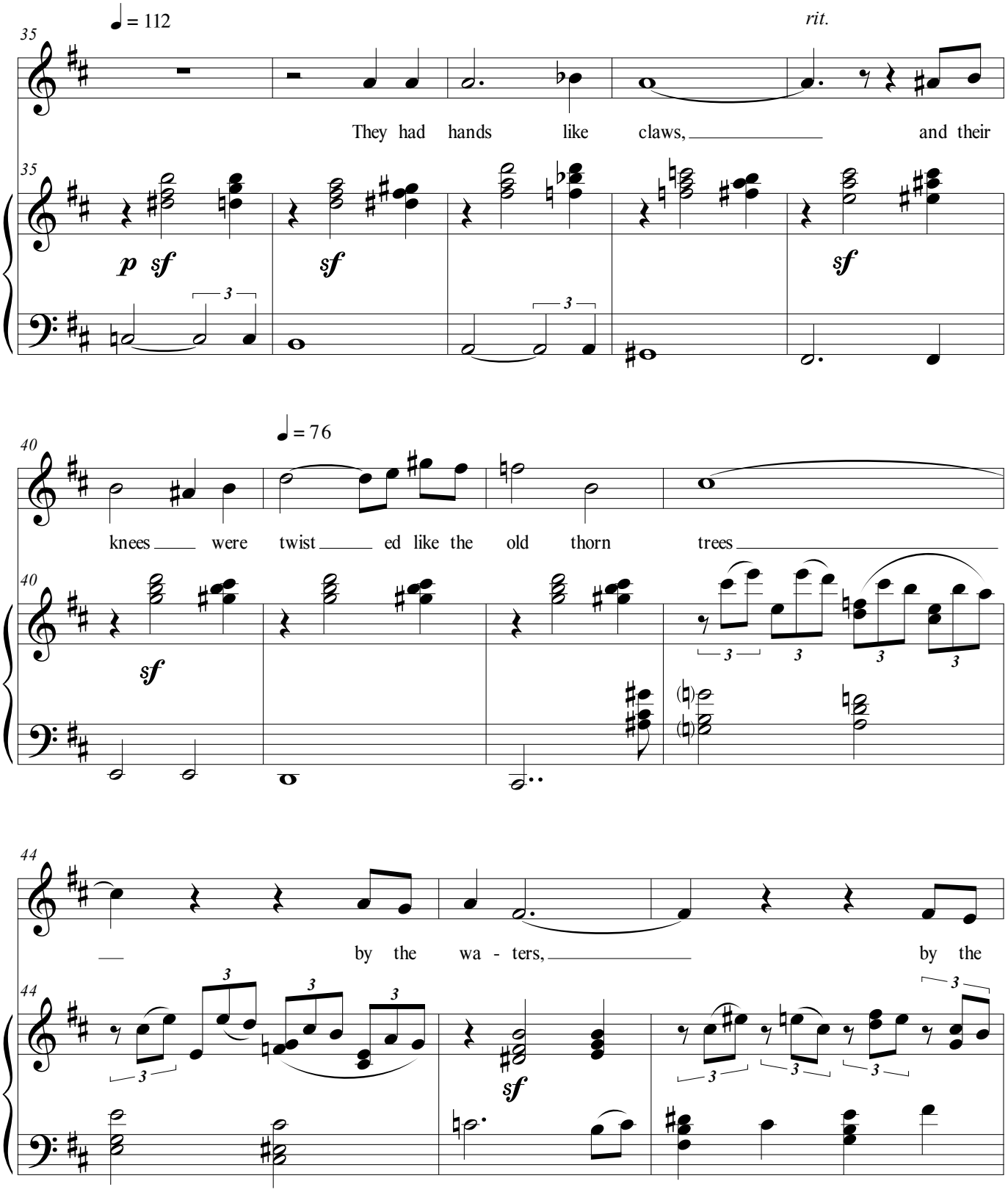


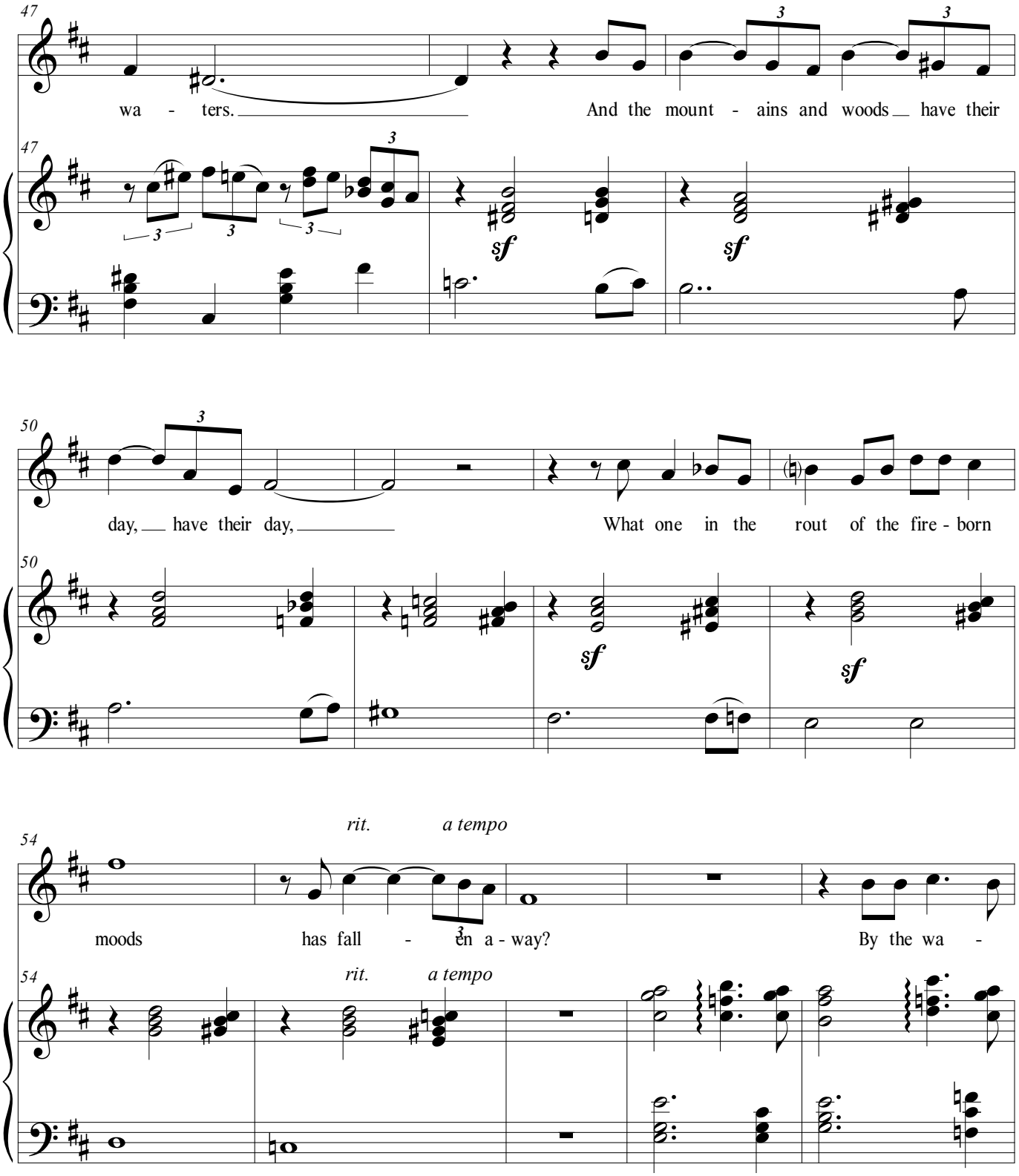

7
"Eve - ry-thing al - ters
Ped.
9
and one by one .
Ped.
11
♩ = 60
we drop a - way. Time drops in de - cay like a

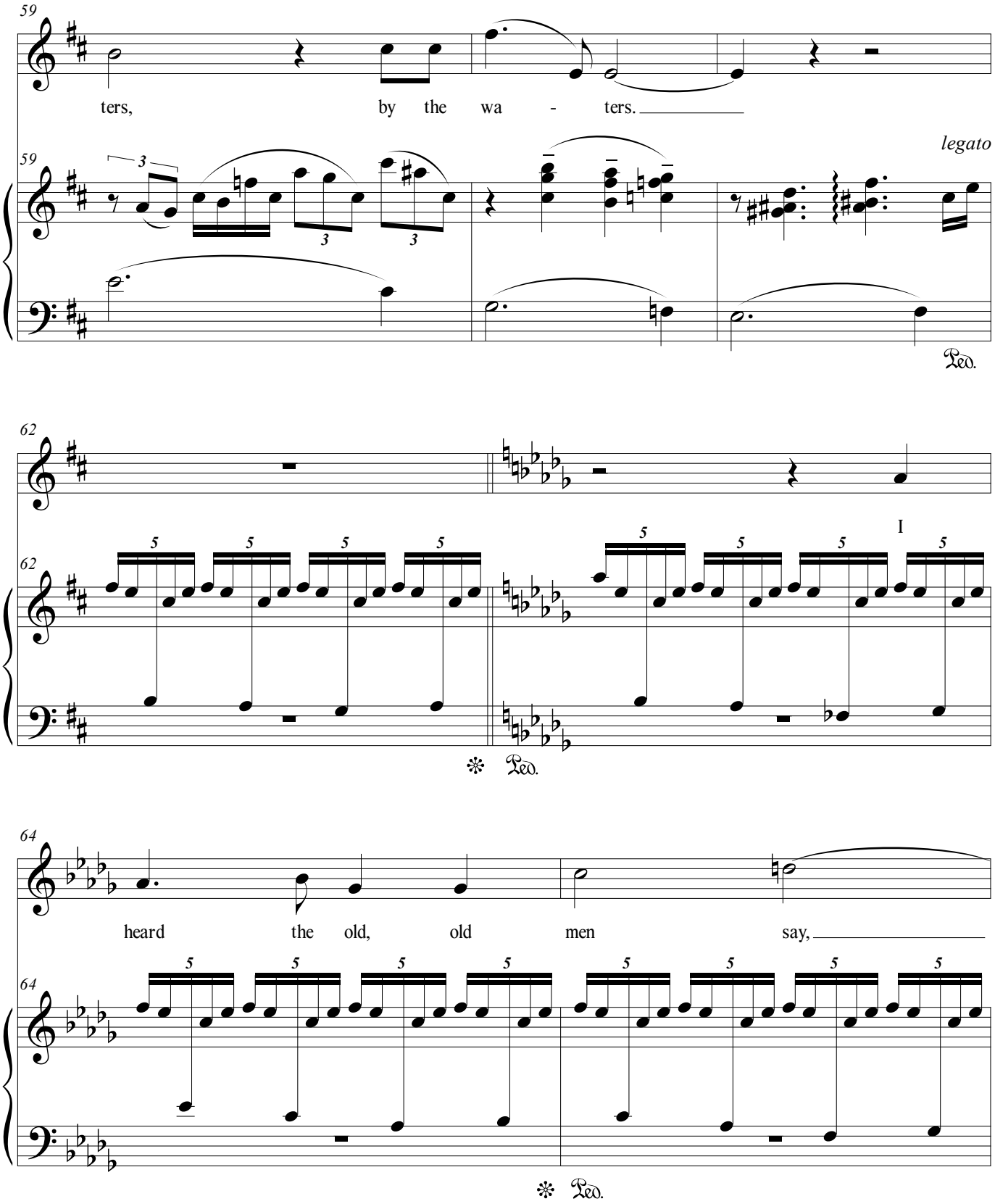

15
can - dle burnt out.
15
cresc.
mf
accel.
17
♩ = 76
legato
And the mount - ains and woods have their
17
p
Ped.
19
day, have their day,
19
Ped.

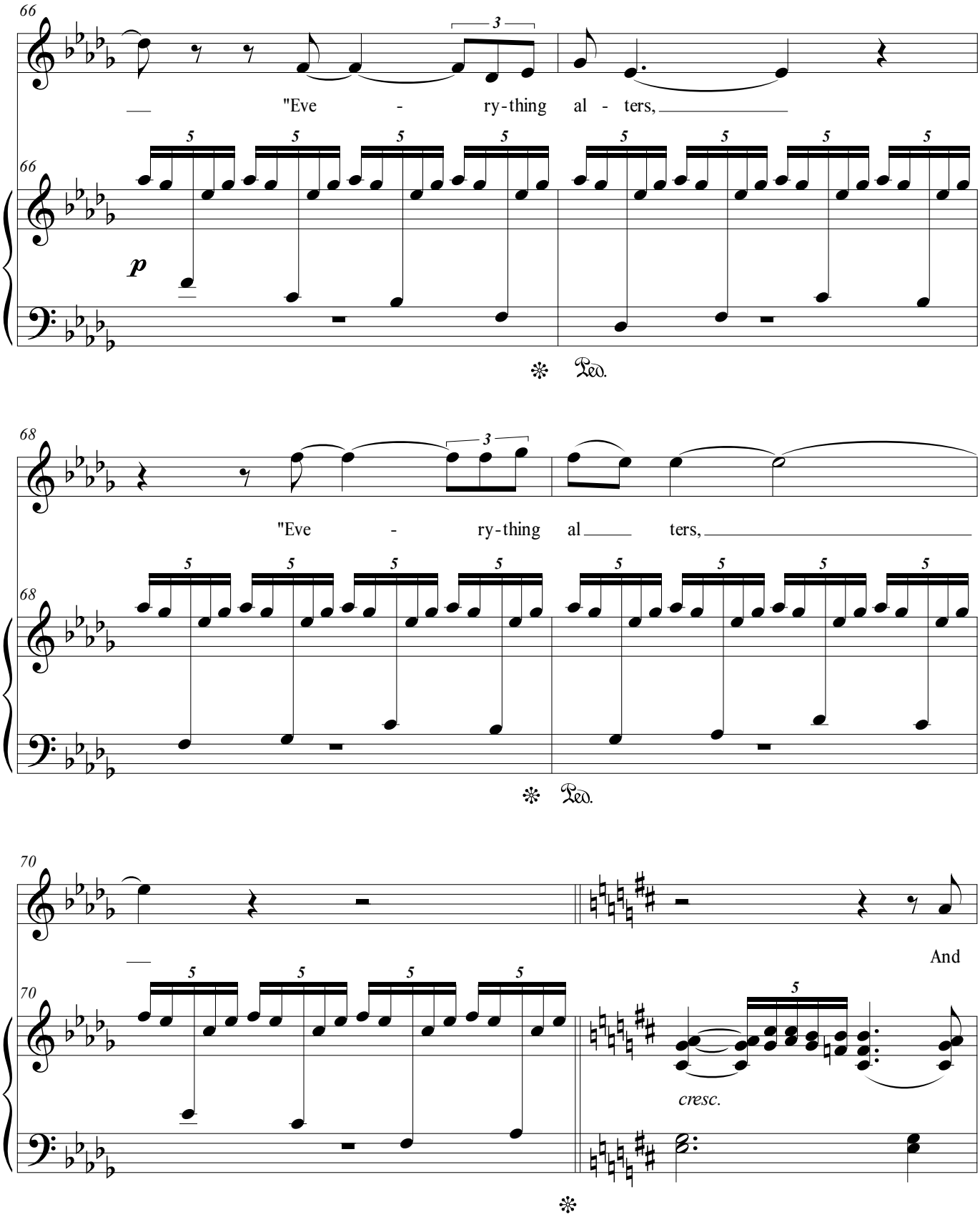

21
the mount-ains and woods have their day, have their day,
21
accel.
a tempo
23
and one by
23
p
Ped.
one we drop a - way.
25
cresc.
Ped.

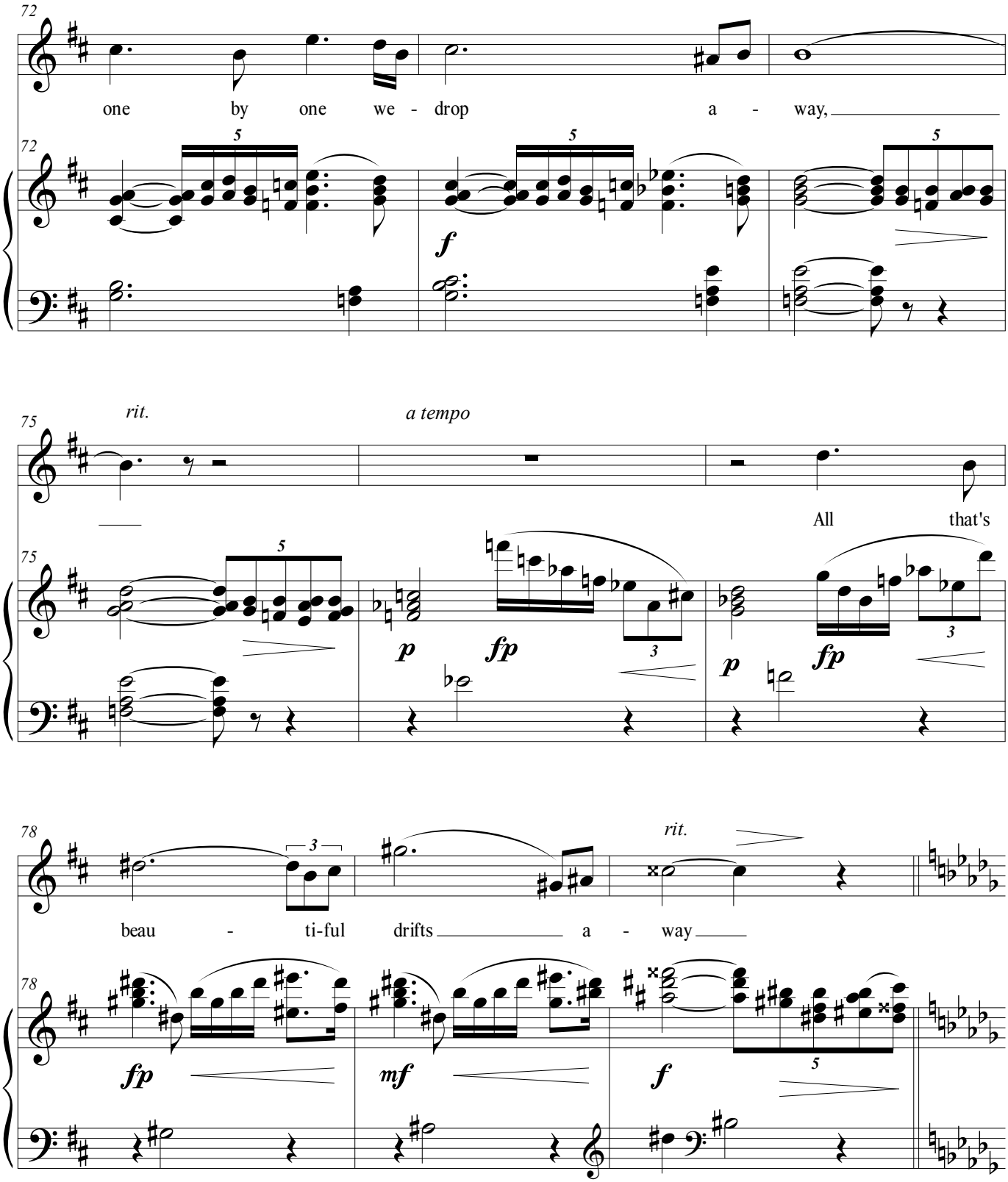

27
"Eve - ry - thing al - ters,"
mf
Ped.
29
rit.
I heard the old, old men say,
p
31
♩ = 60
"Eve-ry-thing al ters,"
rit.
"Eve - ry-thing al - ters,"
mf
p

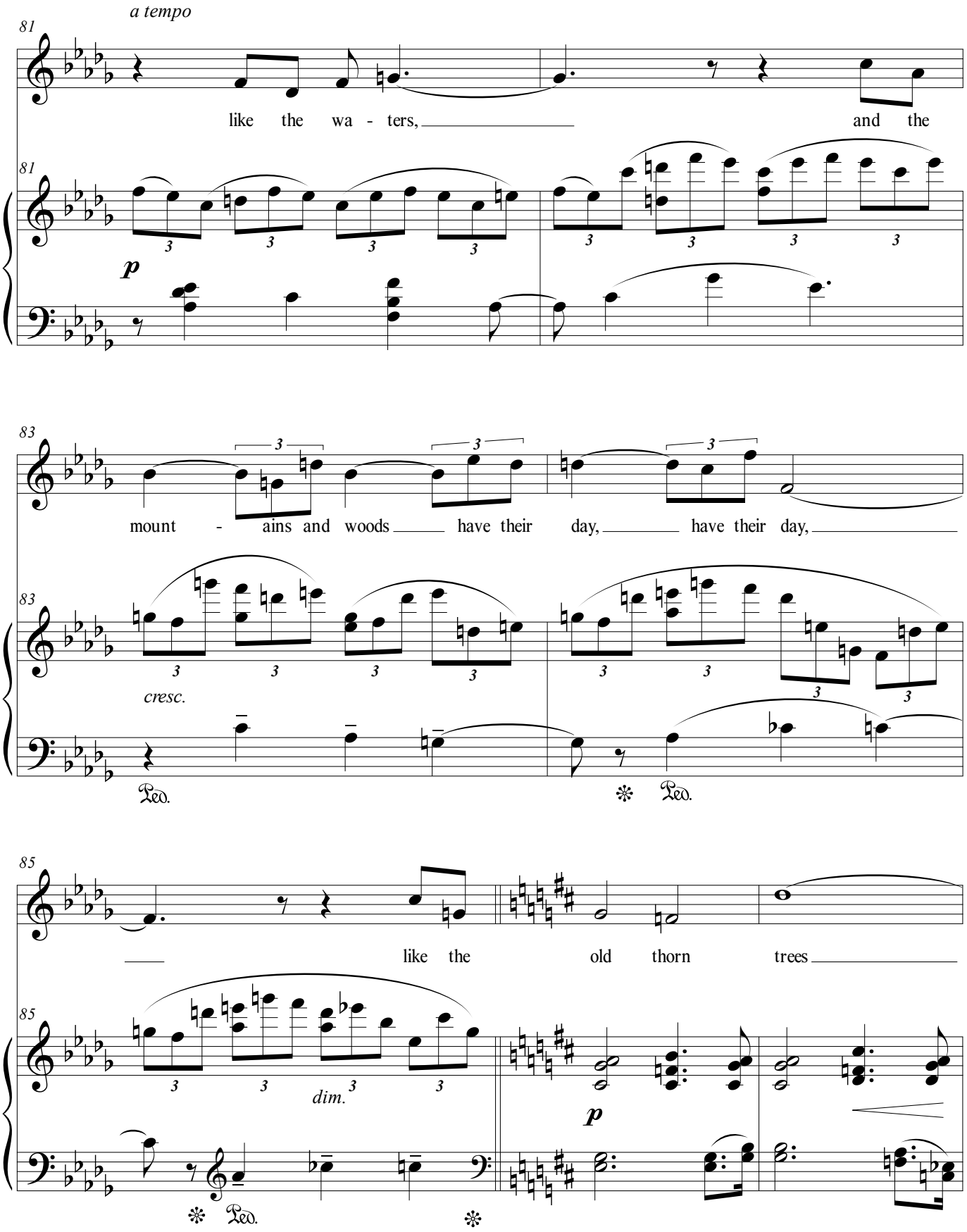

35
♩ = 112
rit.
They had hands like claws, and their
p sf
sf
sf
40
♩ = 76
knees were twist ed like the old thorn trees
sf
44
by the wa - ters, by the
sf

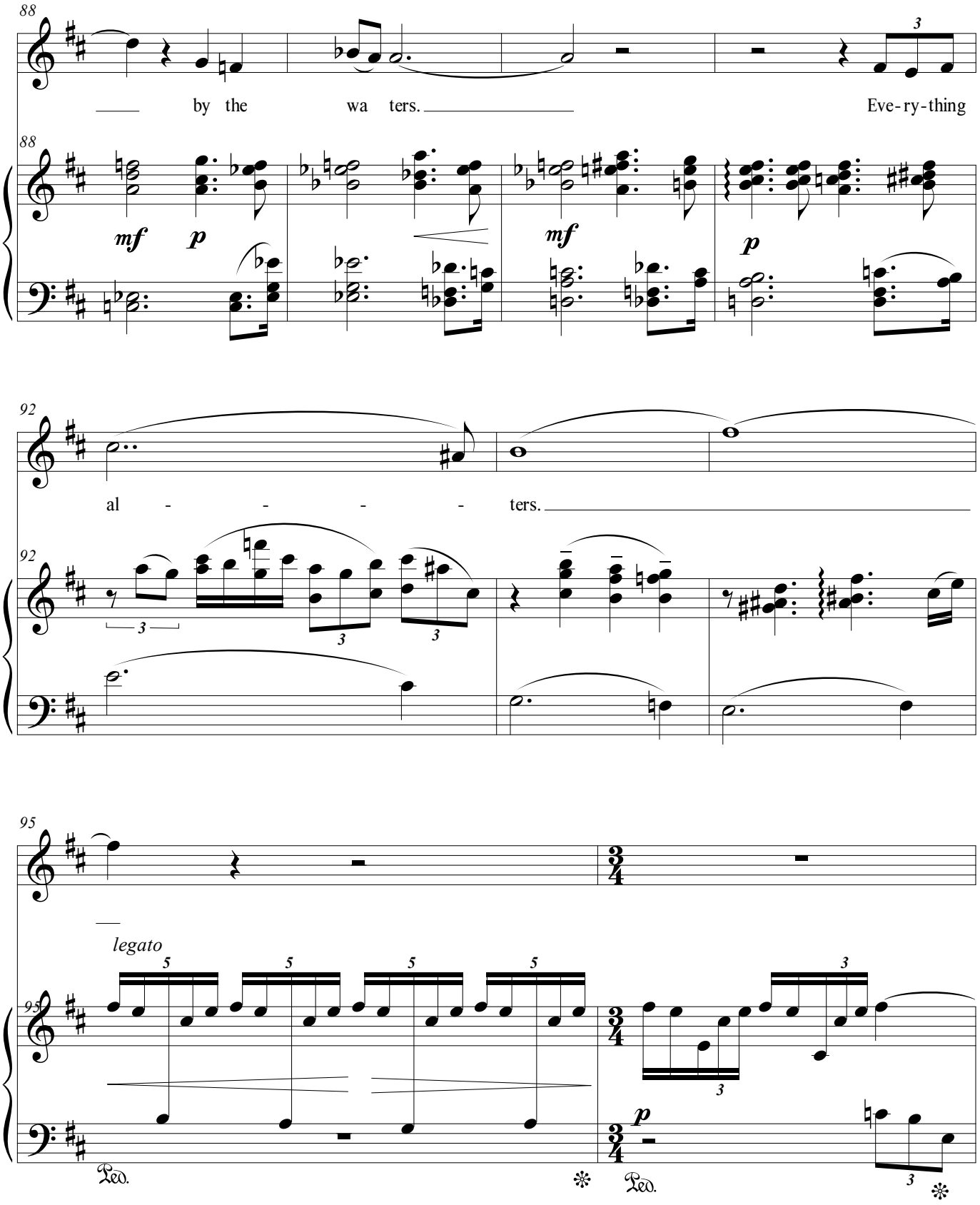

47
wa - ters.
And the mount - ains and woods have their
sf
sf
50
day, have their day,
What one in the rout of the fire - born
sf
sf
54
rit.
a tempo
moods
has fall - en a - way?
By the wa -
rit.
a tempo

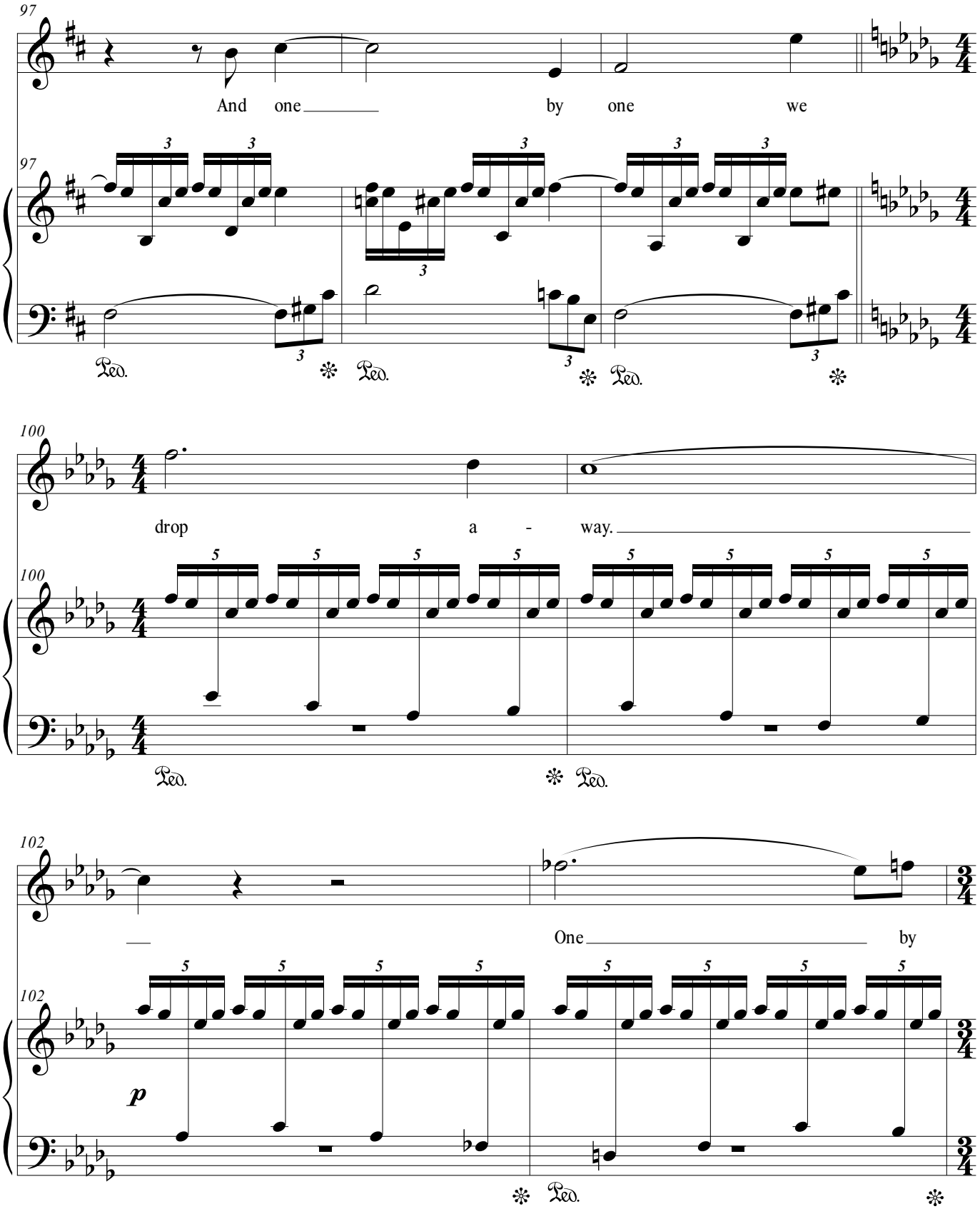

59
ters, by the wa - ters.
59
legato
Ped.
62
62
I
Ped.
64
heard the old, old men say,
64
Ped.

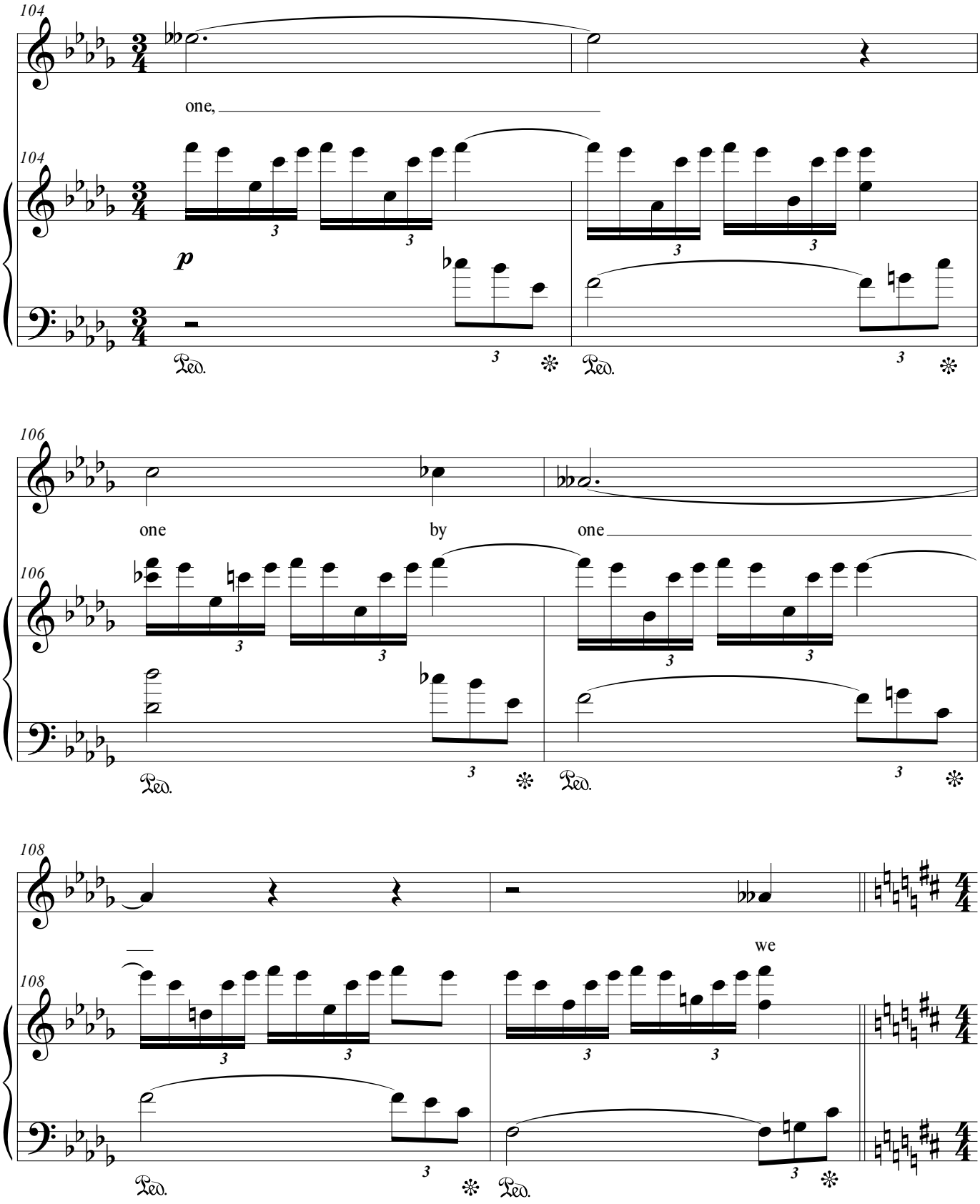

66
"Eve - ry-thing al - ters,
p
Ped.
68
"Eve - ry-thing al ters,
Ped.
70
And
cresc.

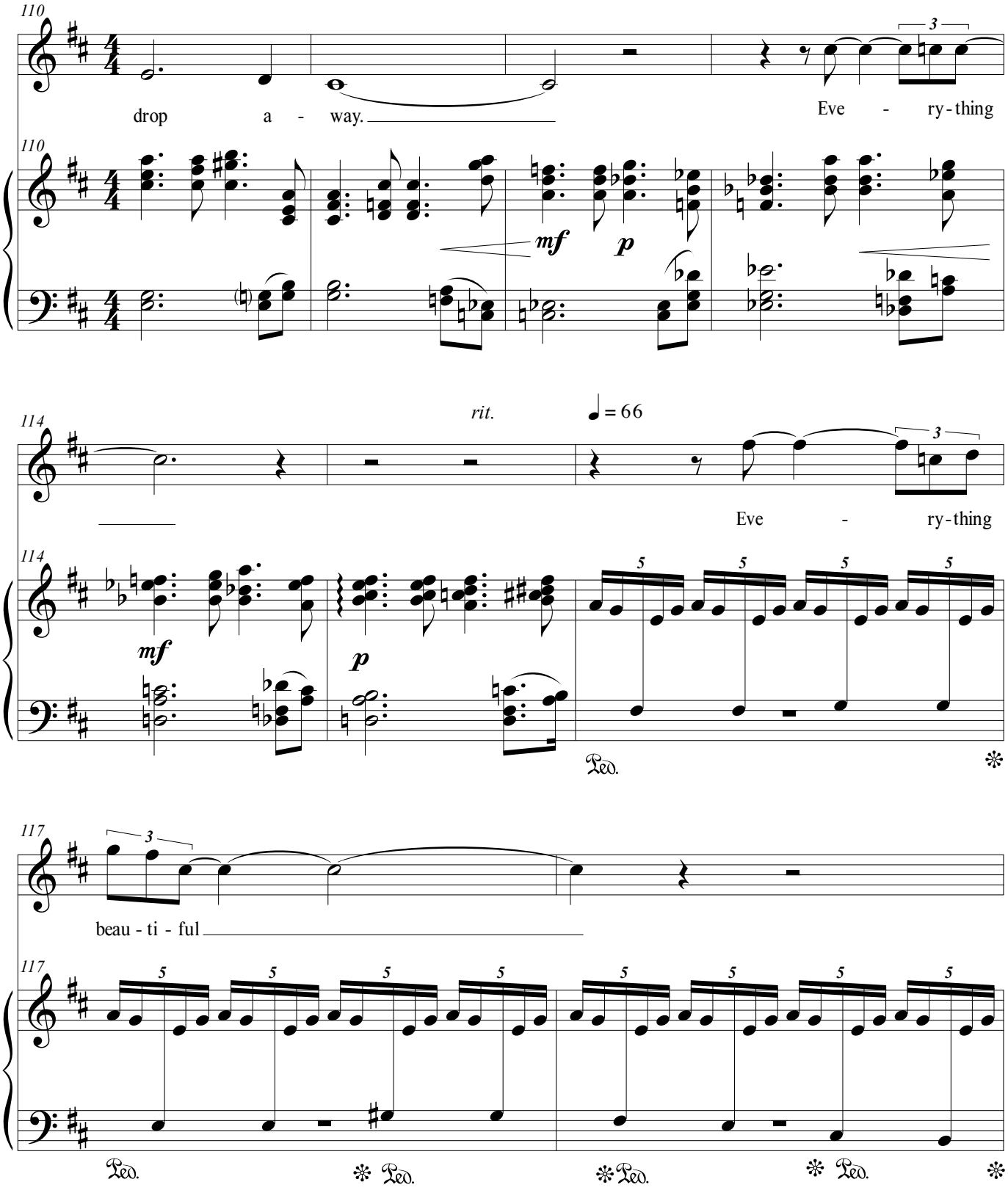

72
one by one we - drop a - way,
72
f
75
rit.
a tempo
All that's
75
p
fp
p
fp
78
beau - ti-ful drifts a - way
rit.
78
fp
mf
f

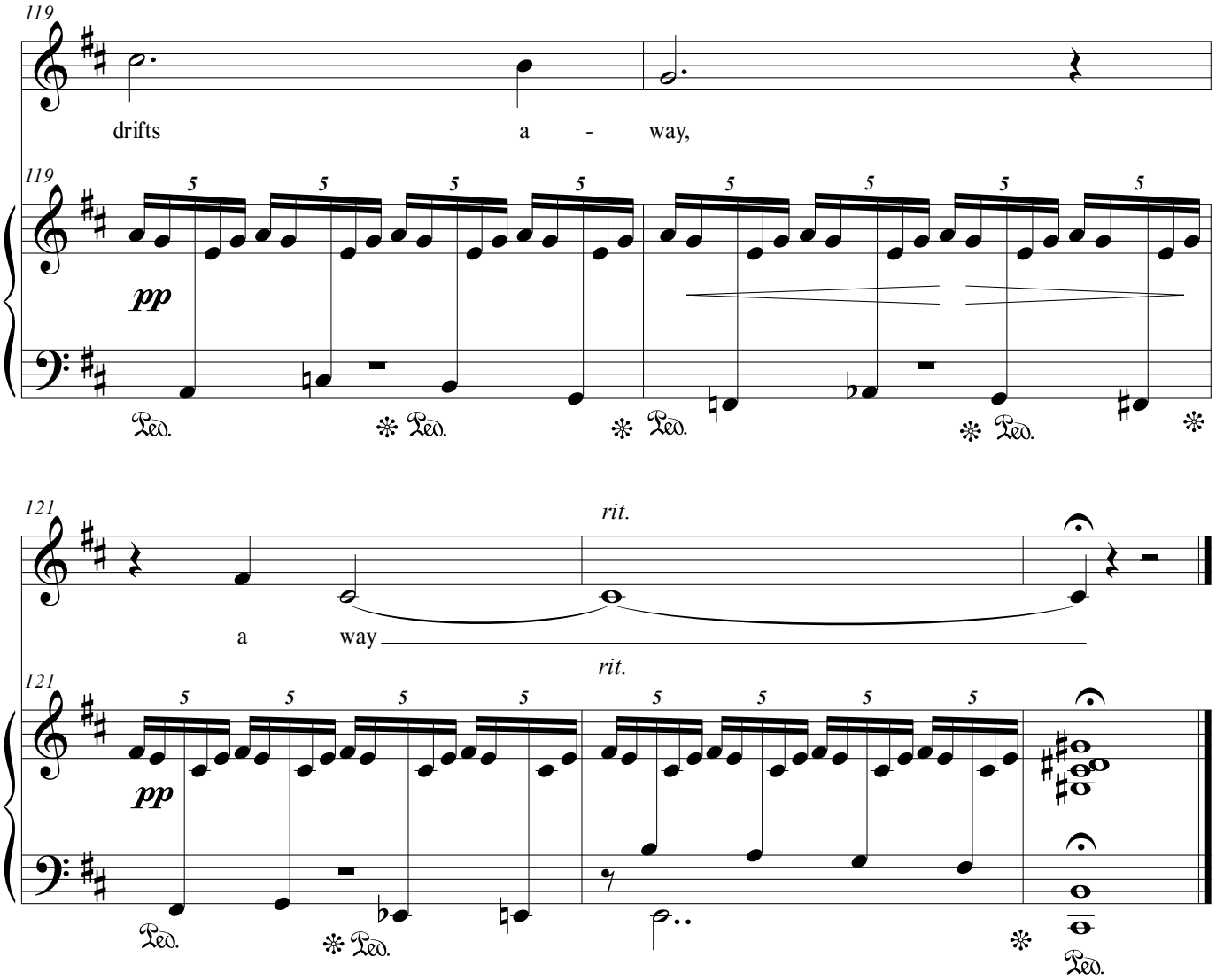

a tempo
81
like the wa - ters, and the
p
83
mount - ains and woods have their day, have their day,
cresc.
Ped.
Ped.
85
like the old thorn trees
dim.
p
Ped.


88
by the wa ters.
Eve-ry-thing
mf p mf p
92
al - - - - ters.
95
legato
Ped. Ped.


97
And one by one we
97
Ped. Ped. Ped.
100
drop a - way.
100
Ped. Ped.
102
One by
102
p
Ped.


104
one,
104
p
Ped.
Ped.
106
one
by
one
106
Ped.
Ped.
108
we
108
Ped.
Ped.


110
drop a - way.
Eve - ry-thing
mf
p
114
rit.
♩ = 66
Eve - ry-thing
mf
p
Ped.
117
beau - ti - ful
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.


119
drifts a - way,
119
pp
Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.
121
rit.
a way
rit.
121
pp
Ped. Ped. Ped.

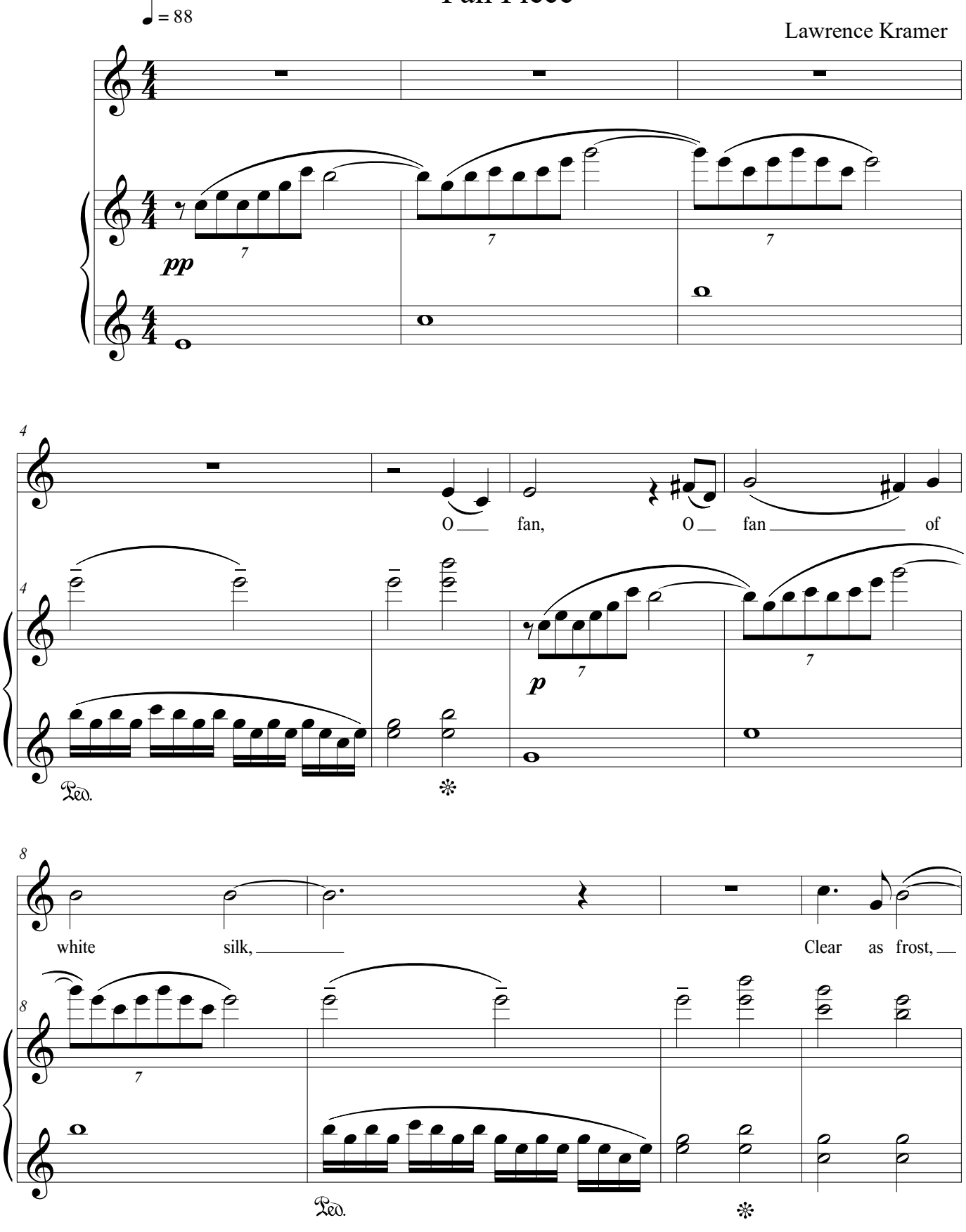
Fan Piece

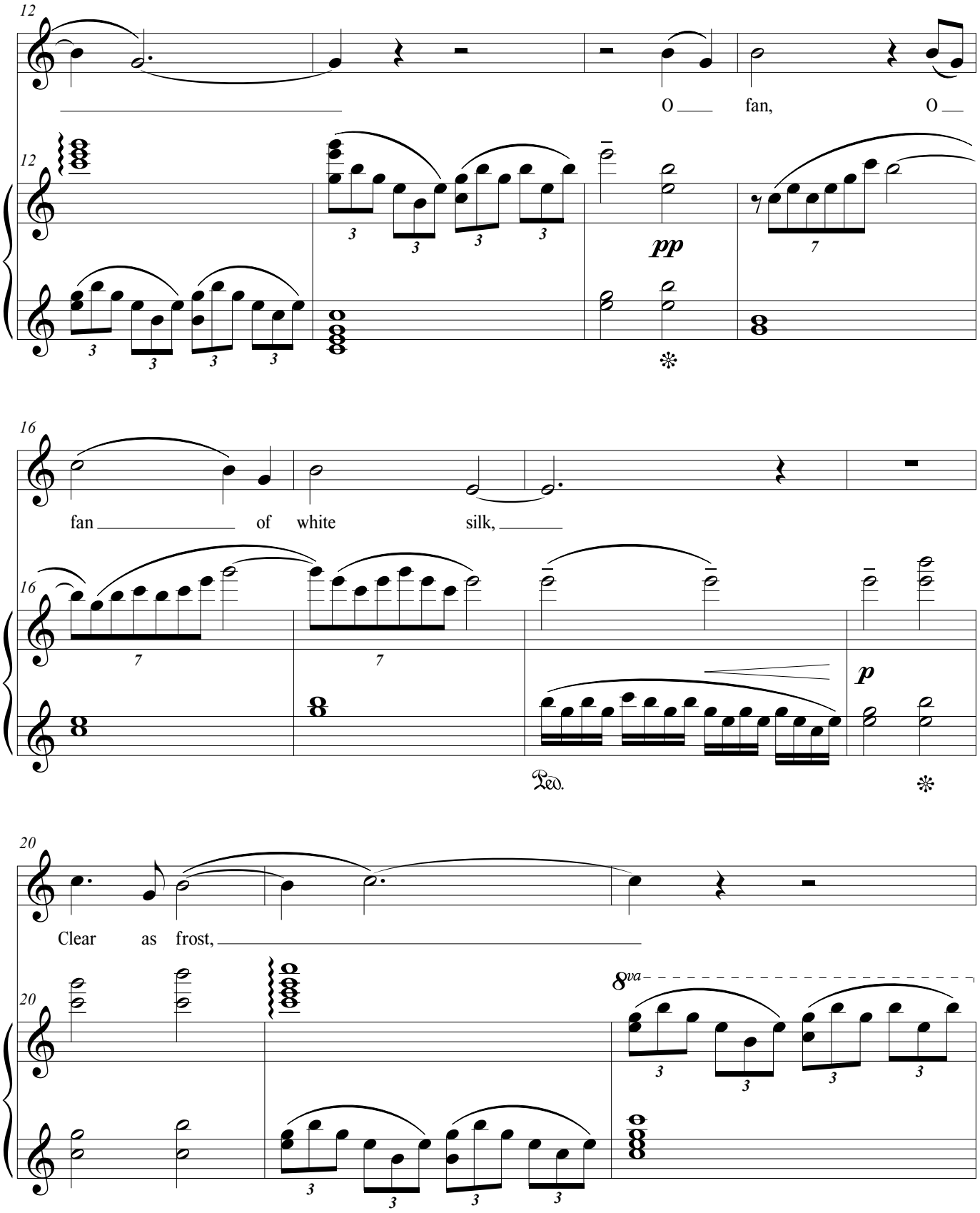
O fan of white silk,
clear as frost on the grass-blade,
you also are laid aside.
--Ezra Pound

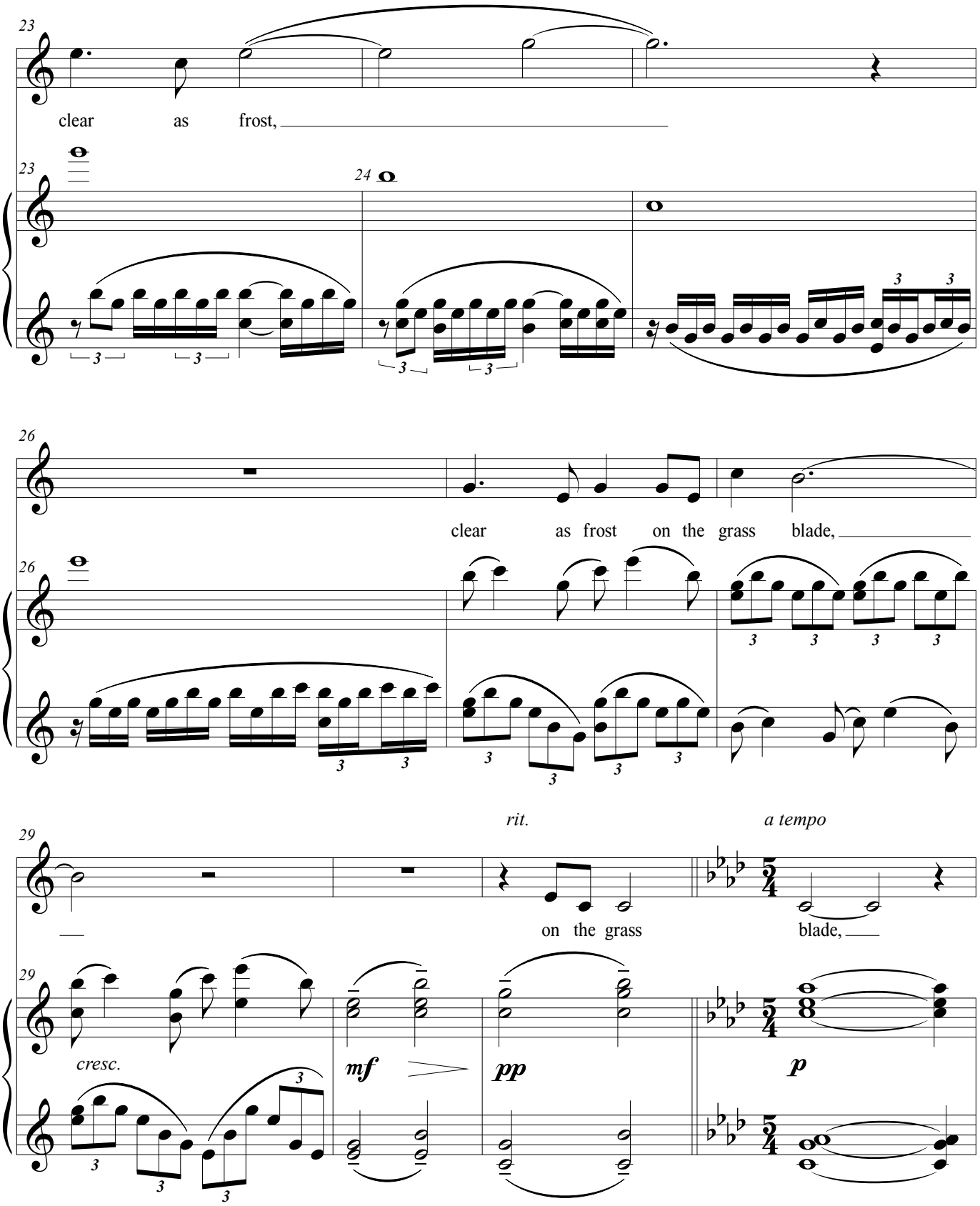
Written Voice Range: C4-G5
Tessitura: E♭4 - E5
Duration: 3:30

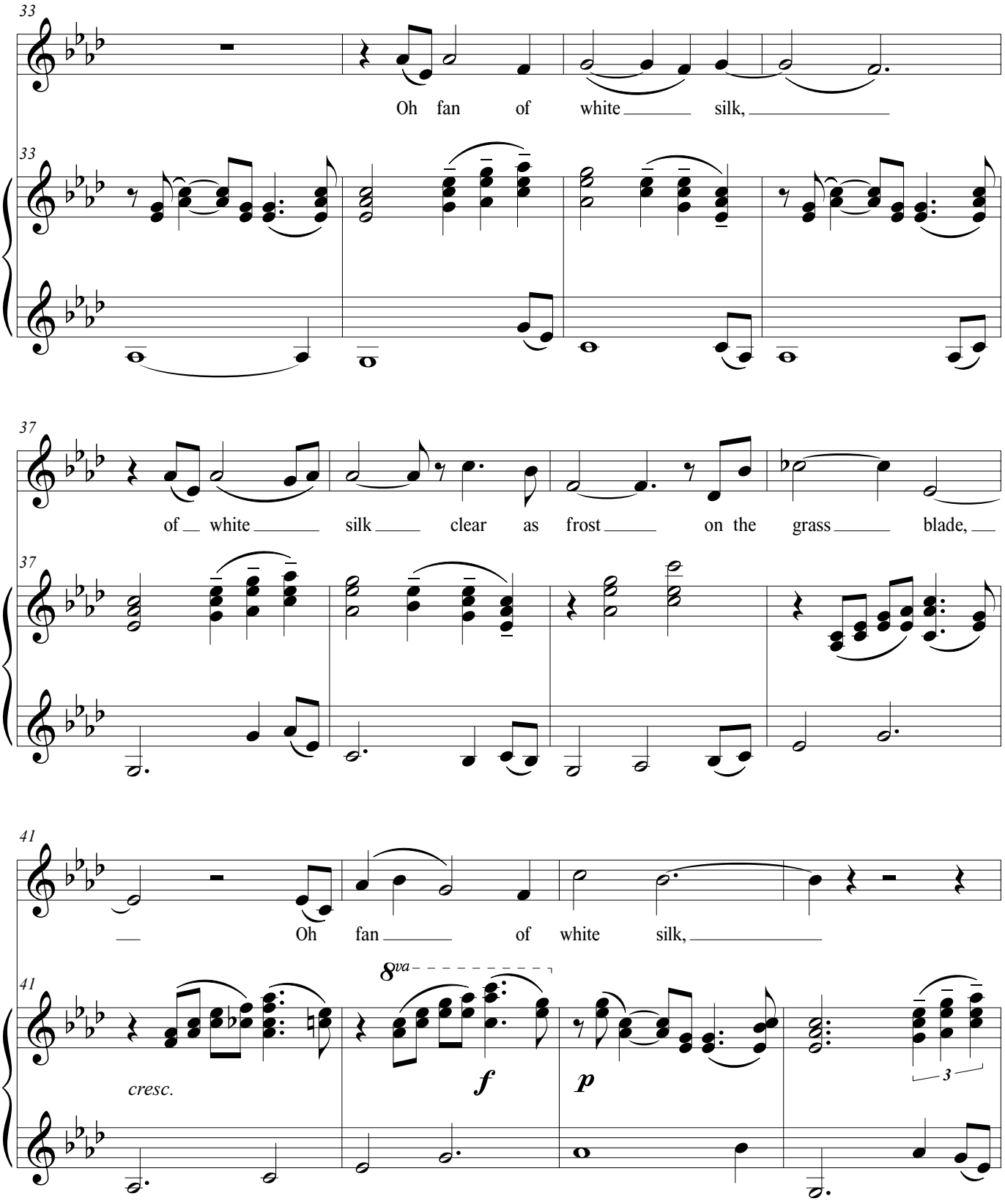
Fan Piece

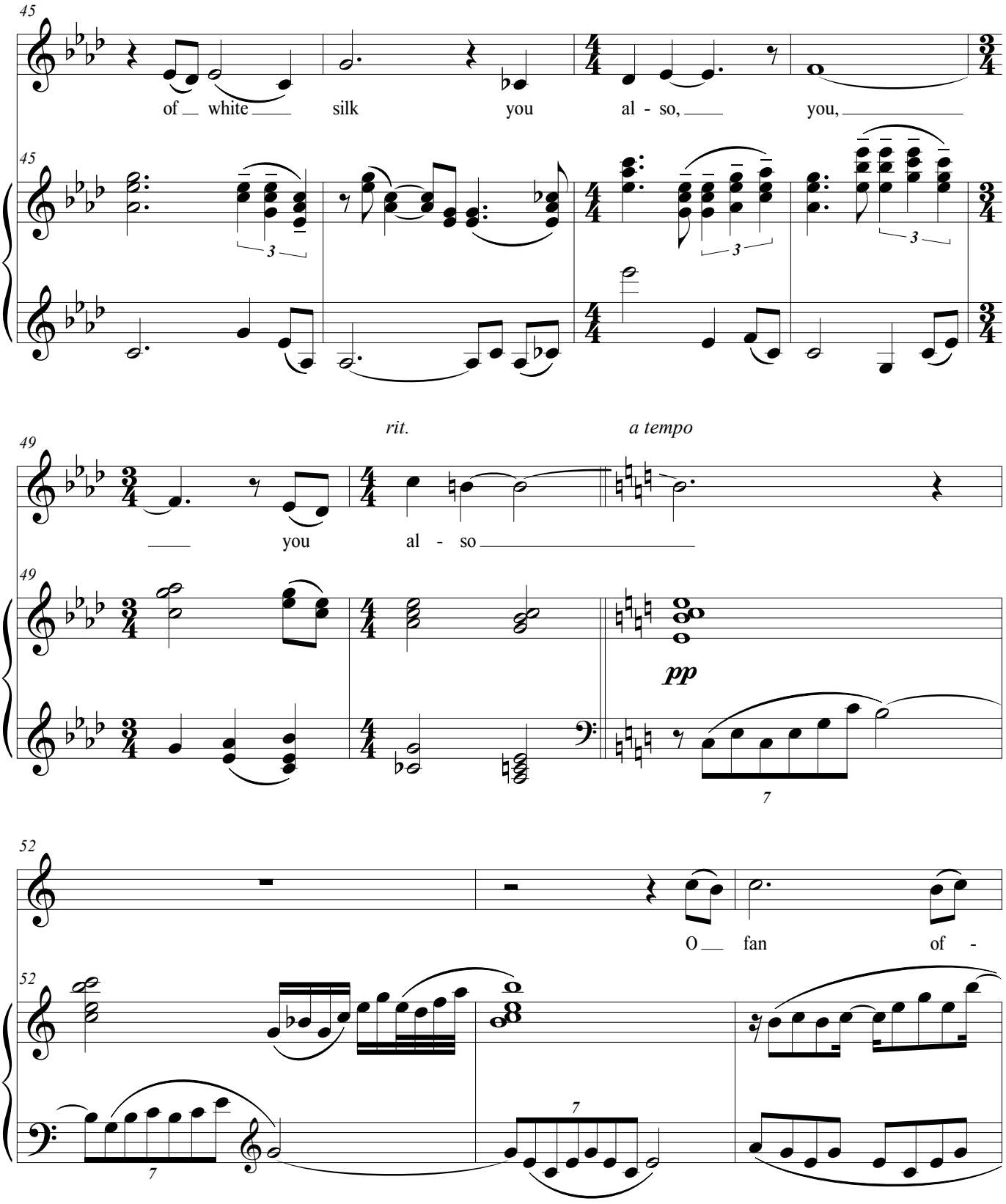
Lawrence Kramer

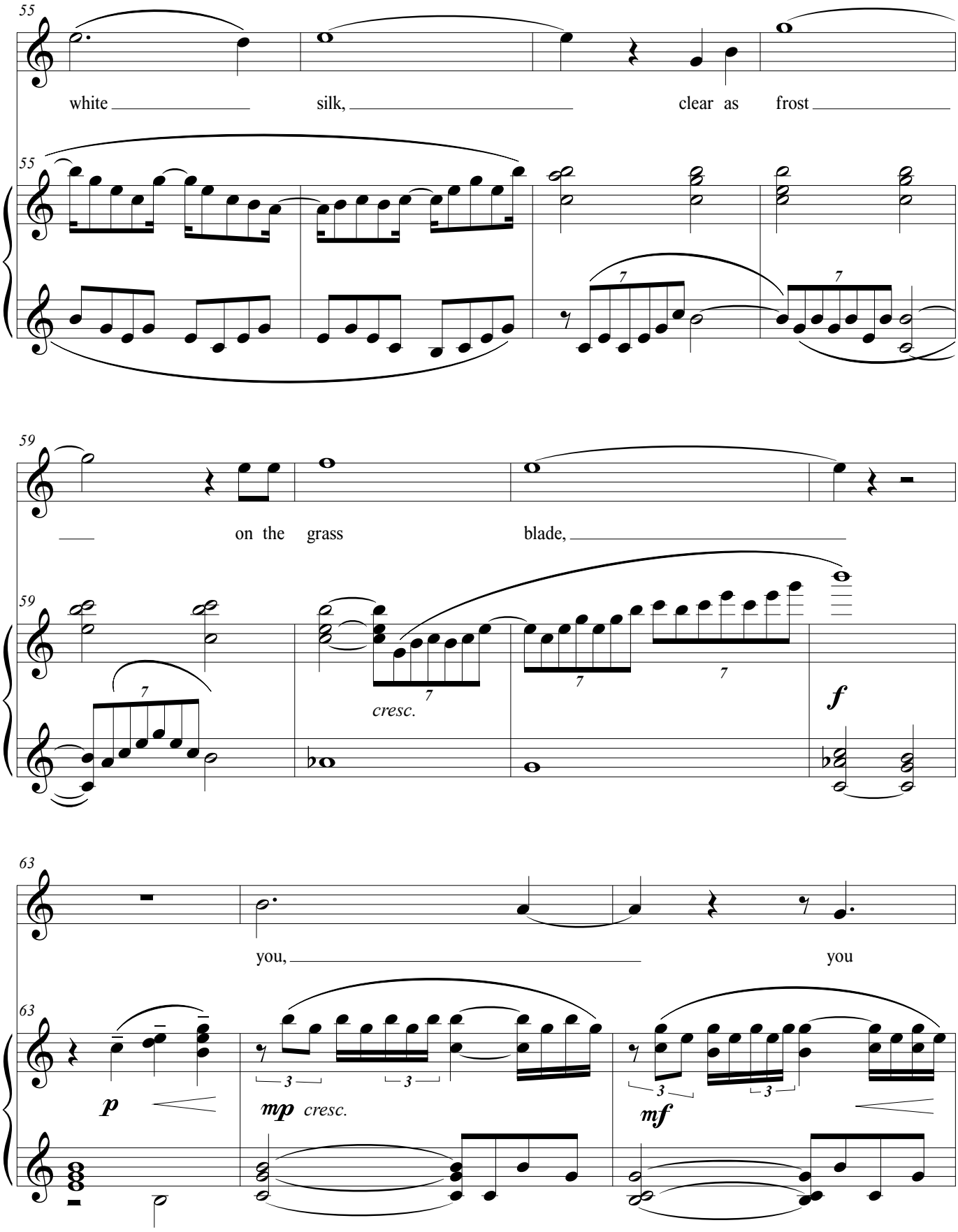


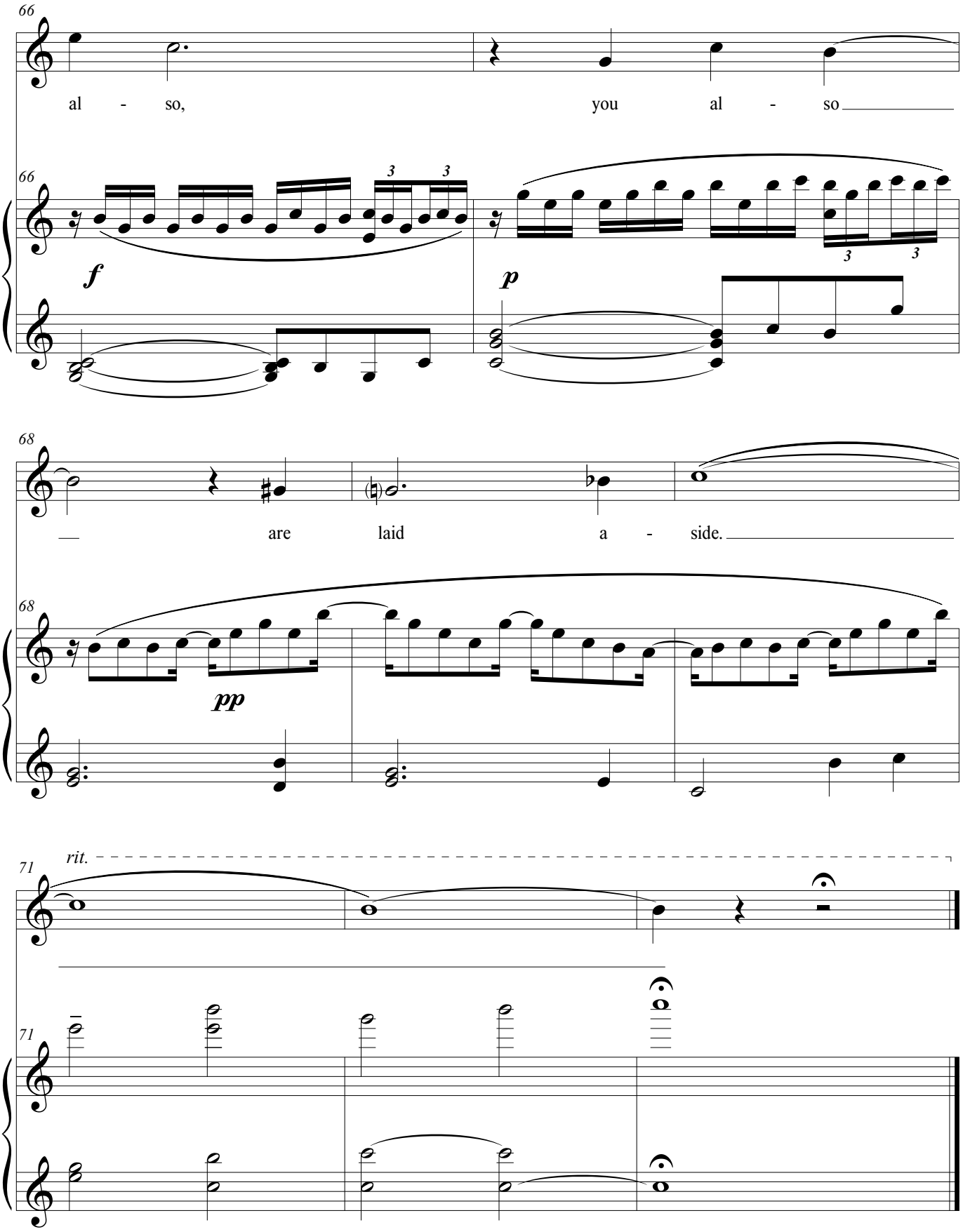

12
O fan, O
12
pp
16
fan of white silk,
16
p
Ped.
20
Clear as frost,
20
8va


23
clear as frost,
24
26
clear as frost on the grass blade,
29
rit.
a tempo
on the grass
blade,
cresc.
mf
pp
p


33
Oh fan of white silk,
33
37
of white silk clear as frost on the grass blade,
37
41
Oh fan of white silk,
41
8va
cresc.
f
p
3


45
of white silk you al - so, you,
45
3
3
3
rit.
a tempo
49
you al - so
49
pp
7
52
O fan of -
52
7
7


55
white silk, clear as frost
55
59
on the grass blade,
59
cresc.
f
63
you, you
63
p
mp cresc.
mf


66
al - so,
you al - so
66
f
p
68
are laid a - side.
68
pp
71
rit.
71

Its Own Summer

High Voice

From *Kora in Hell*

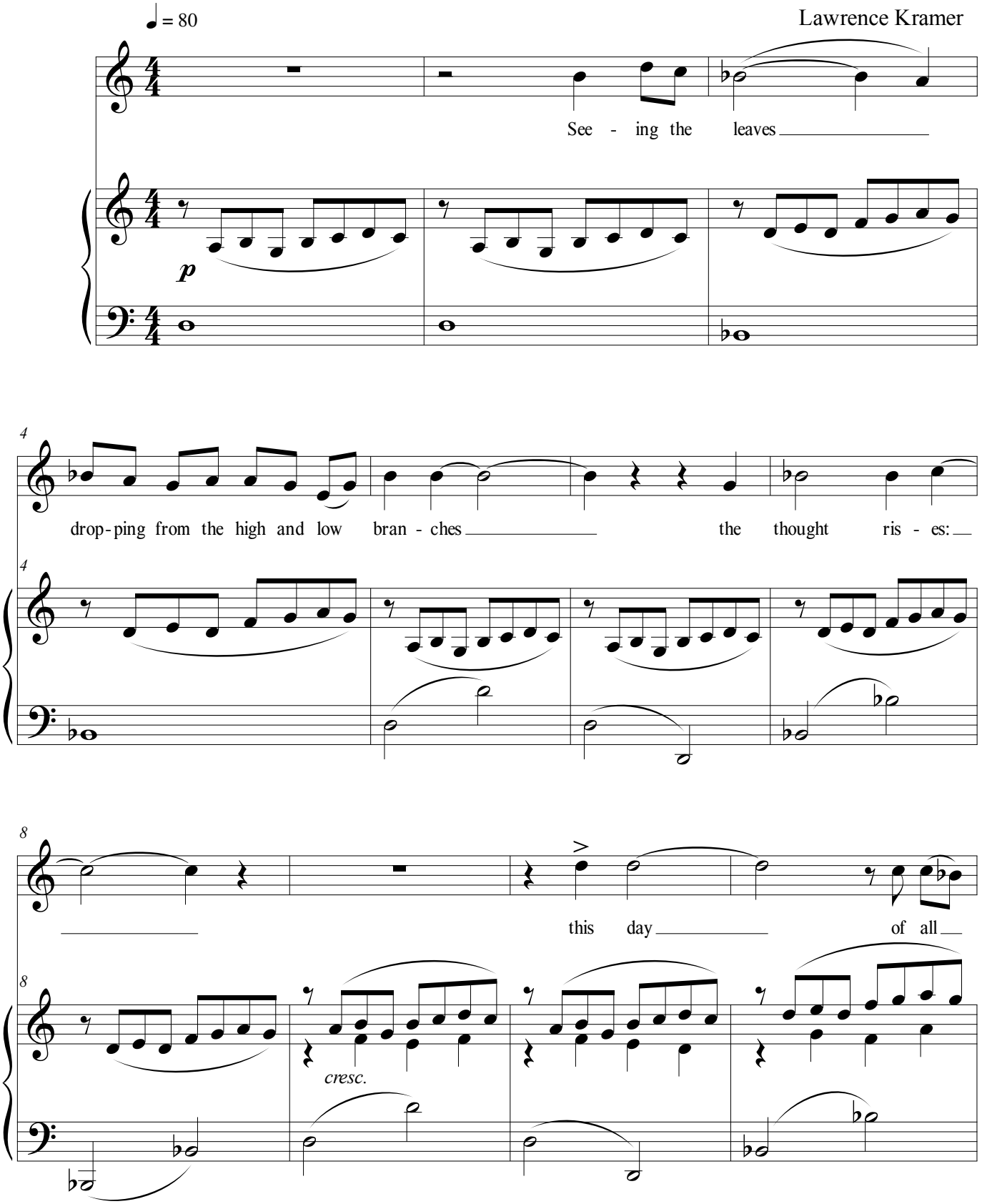
Seeing the leaves dropping from the high and low branches the thought rises: this day of all others is the one chosen, all other days fall away from it on either side and only itself remains in perfect fulness. It is its own summer, of its leaves as they scrape on the smooth ground it must build its perfection.

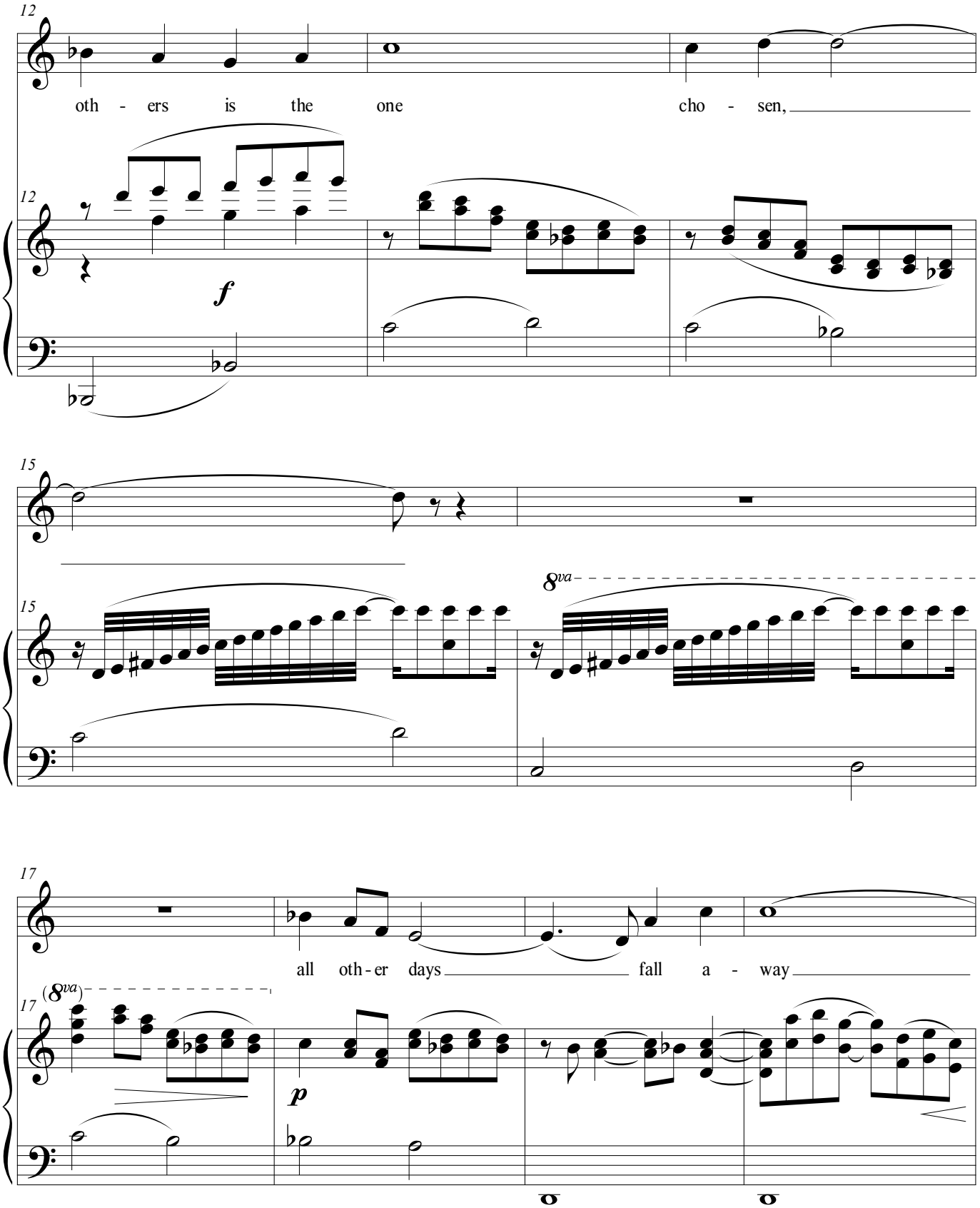
--William Carlos Williams

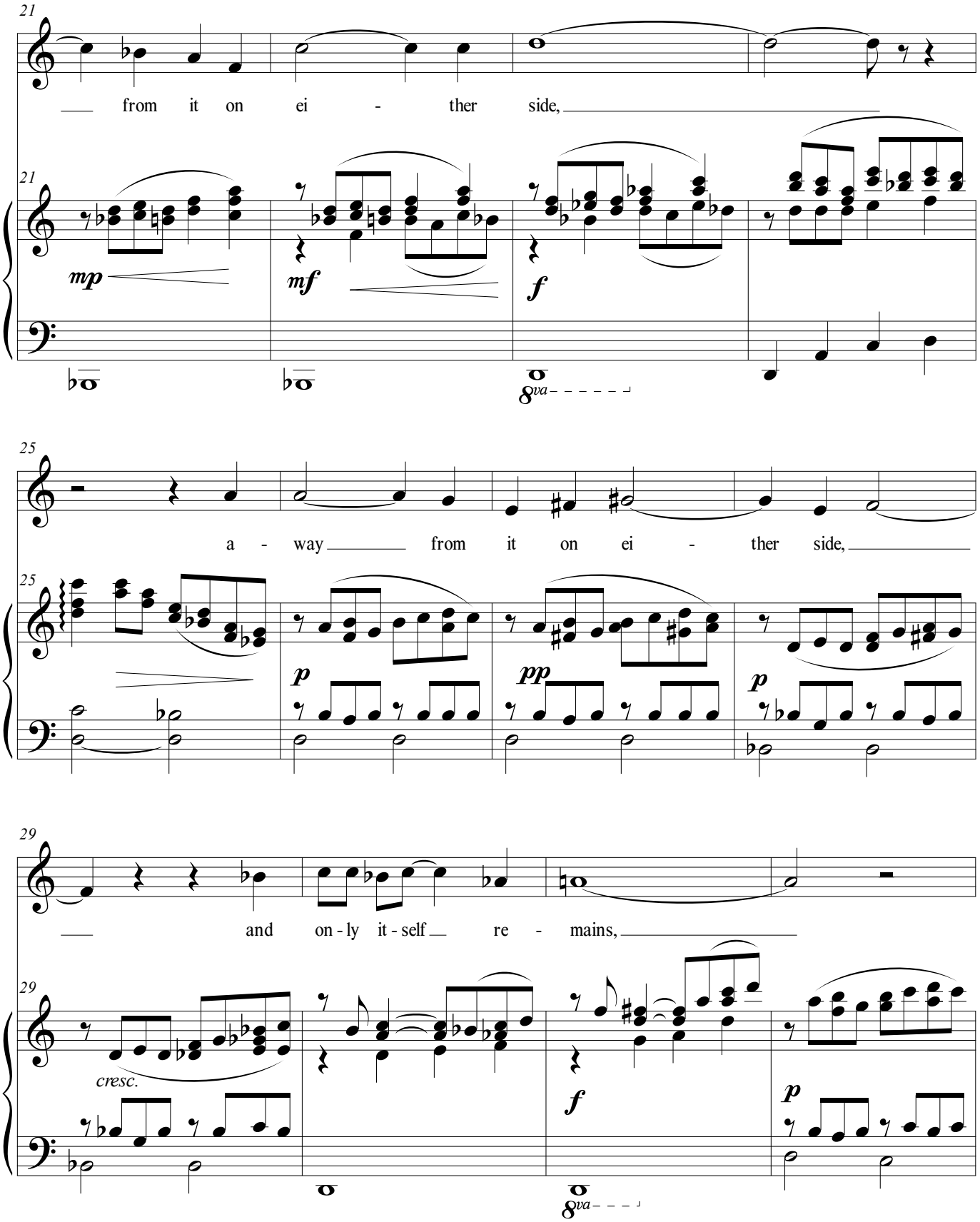
Written Voice Range: D4 - G5
Tessitura: F4 - E♭5
Duration 3:50

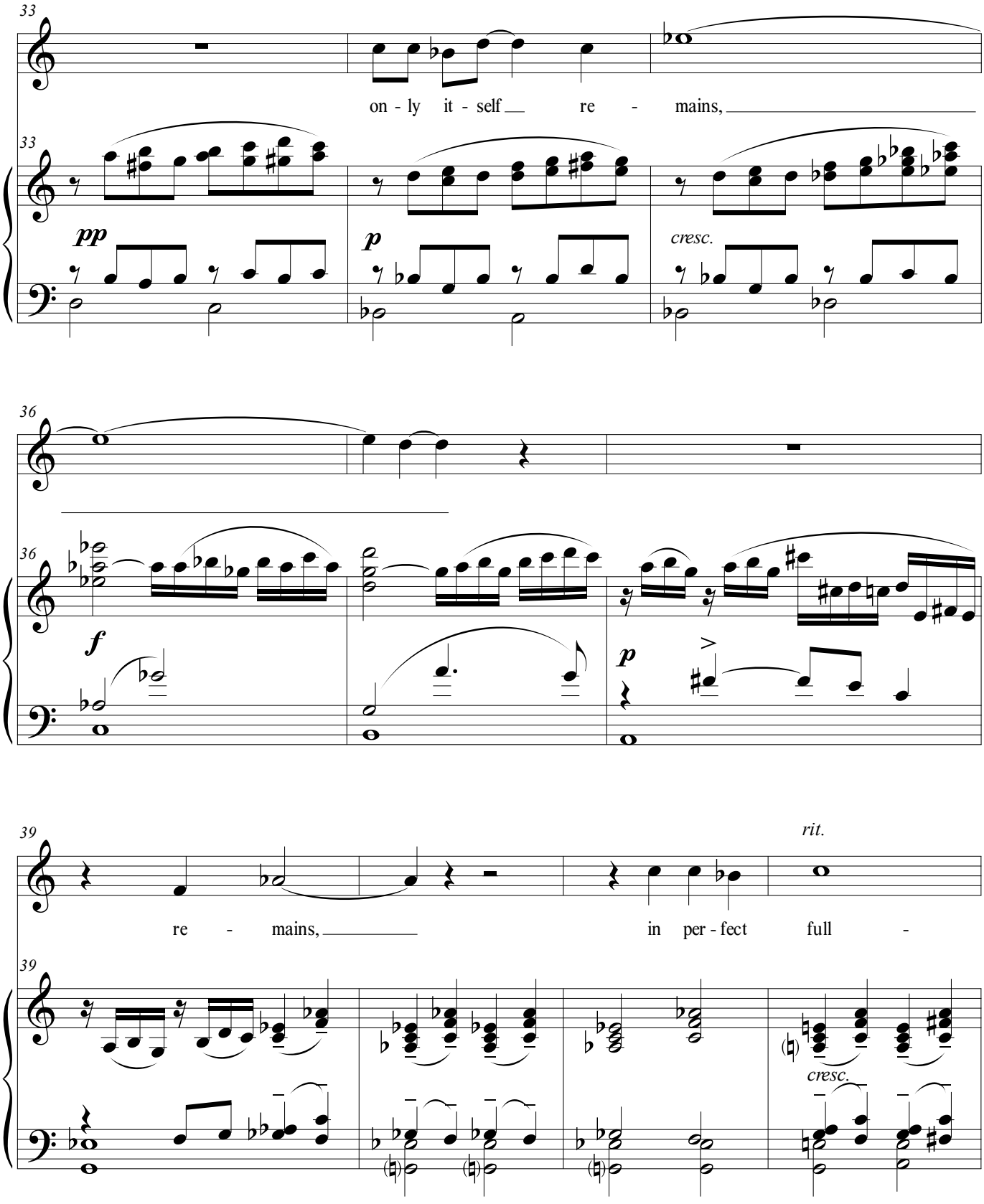
Composed 2019

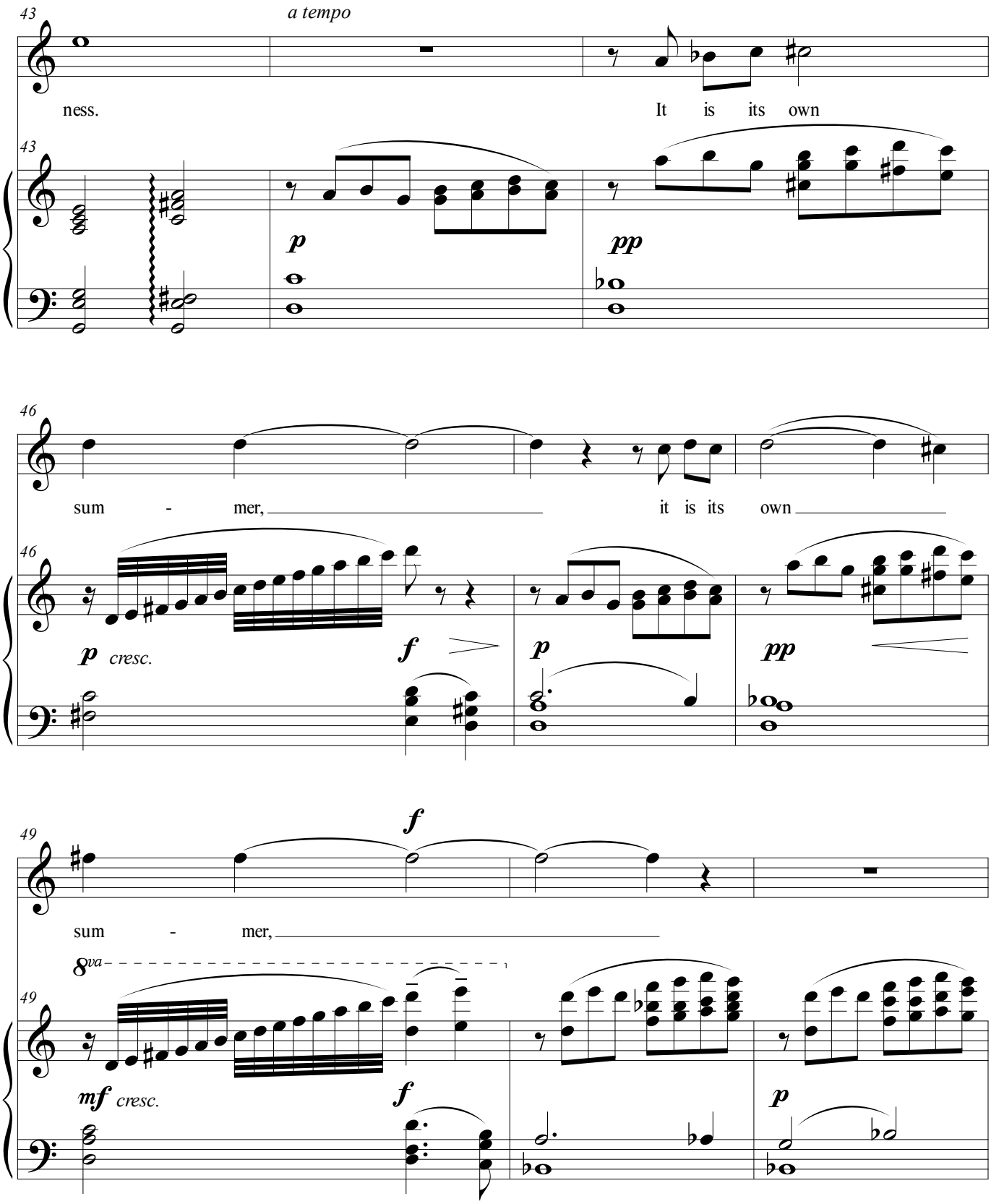
Its Own Summer (from *Kora in Hell*)

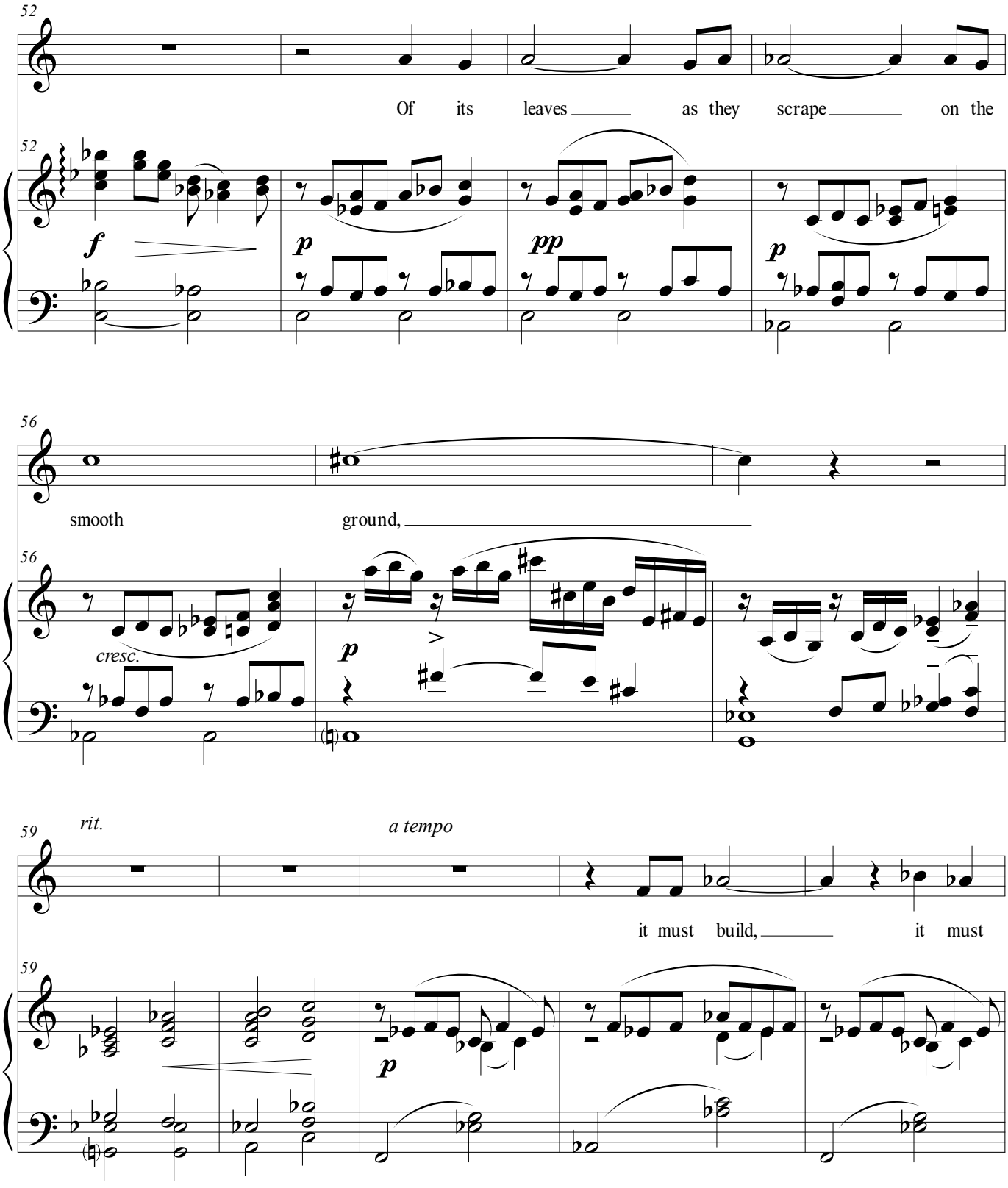


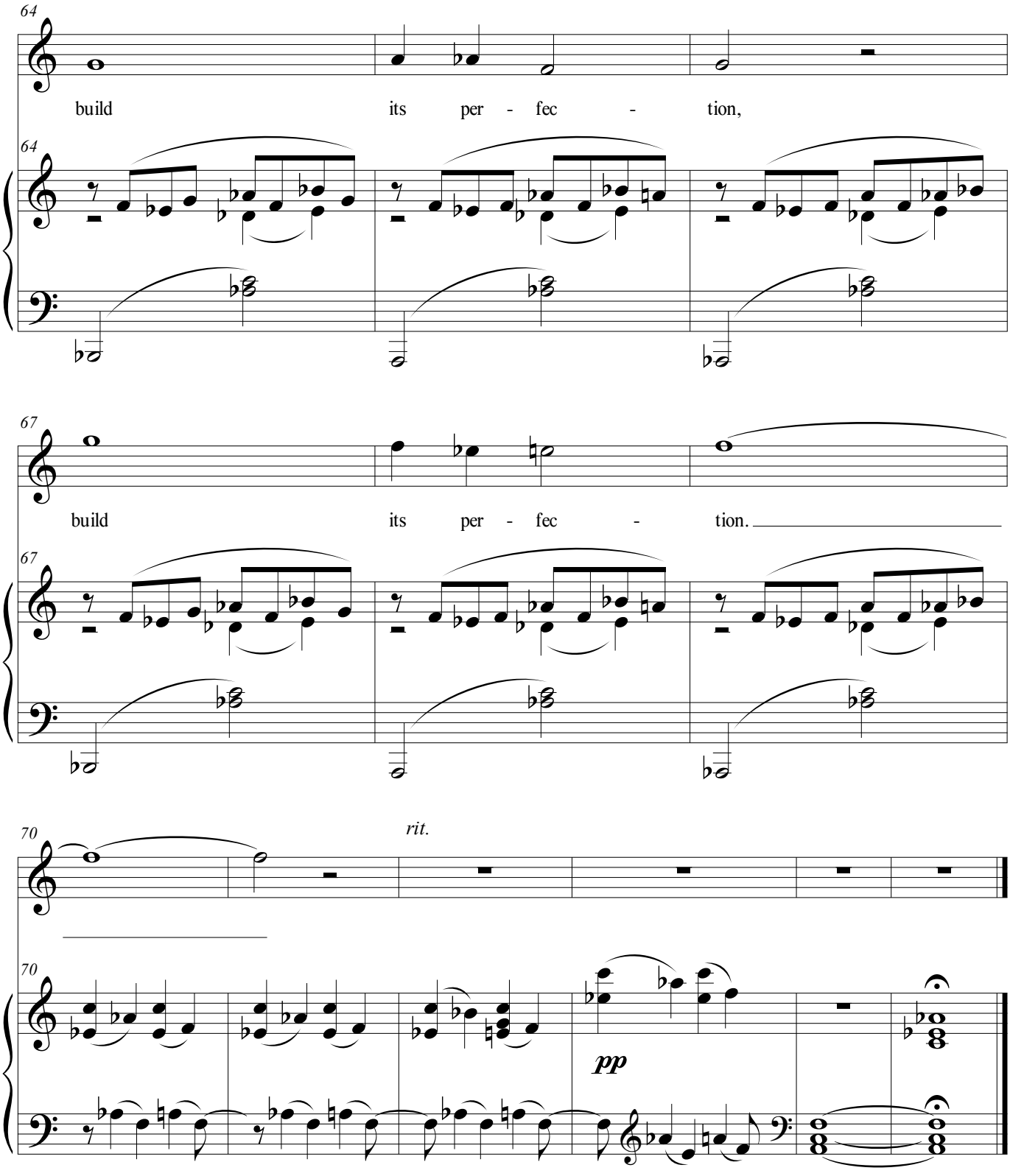

12
oth - ers is the one cho - sen,
12
f
15
15
8va
17
all oth - er days fall a - way
17
(8va)
p


21
from it on ei - ther side,
mp
mf
f
8va
25
a - way from it on ei - ther side,
p
pp
p
29
and on - ly it - self re - mains,
cresc.
f
p
8va


33
on - ly it - self re - mains,
pp
p
cresc.
36
f
p
39
re - mains, in per - fect full -
rit.
cresc.


43
a tempo
ness.
It is its own
43
p
pp
46
sum - mer,
it is its own
46
p cresc.
f
p
pp
49
f
sum - mer,
8va
49
mf cresc.
f
p


52
Of its leaves as they scrape on the
52
f
p
pp
p
56
smooth ground,
56
cresc.
p
59
rit.
a tempo
it must build, it must
59
p


64
build its per - fec - tion,
64
67
build its per - fec - tion.
67
70
rit.
70
pp

Look! We Have Come Through

High Voice

Not I, not I, but the wind that blows through me!
A fine wind is blowing the new direction of Time.
If only I let it bear me, carry me, if only it carry me!
If only I am sensitive, subtle, oh, delicate, a winged gift!
If only, most lovely of all, I yield myself and am borrowed
By the fine, fine wind that takes its course through the chaos of the world
Like a fine, an exquisite chisel, a wedge-blade inserted;
If only I am keen and hard like the sheer tip of a wedge
Driven by invisible blows,
The rock will split, we shall come at the wonder, we shall find the Hesperides.

Oh, for the wonder that bubbles into my soul,
I would be a good fountain, a good well-head,
Would blur no whisper, spoil no expression.

What is the knocking?
What is the knocking at the door in the night?
It is somebody wants to do us harm.

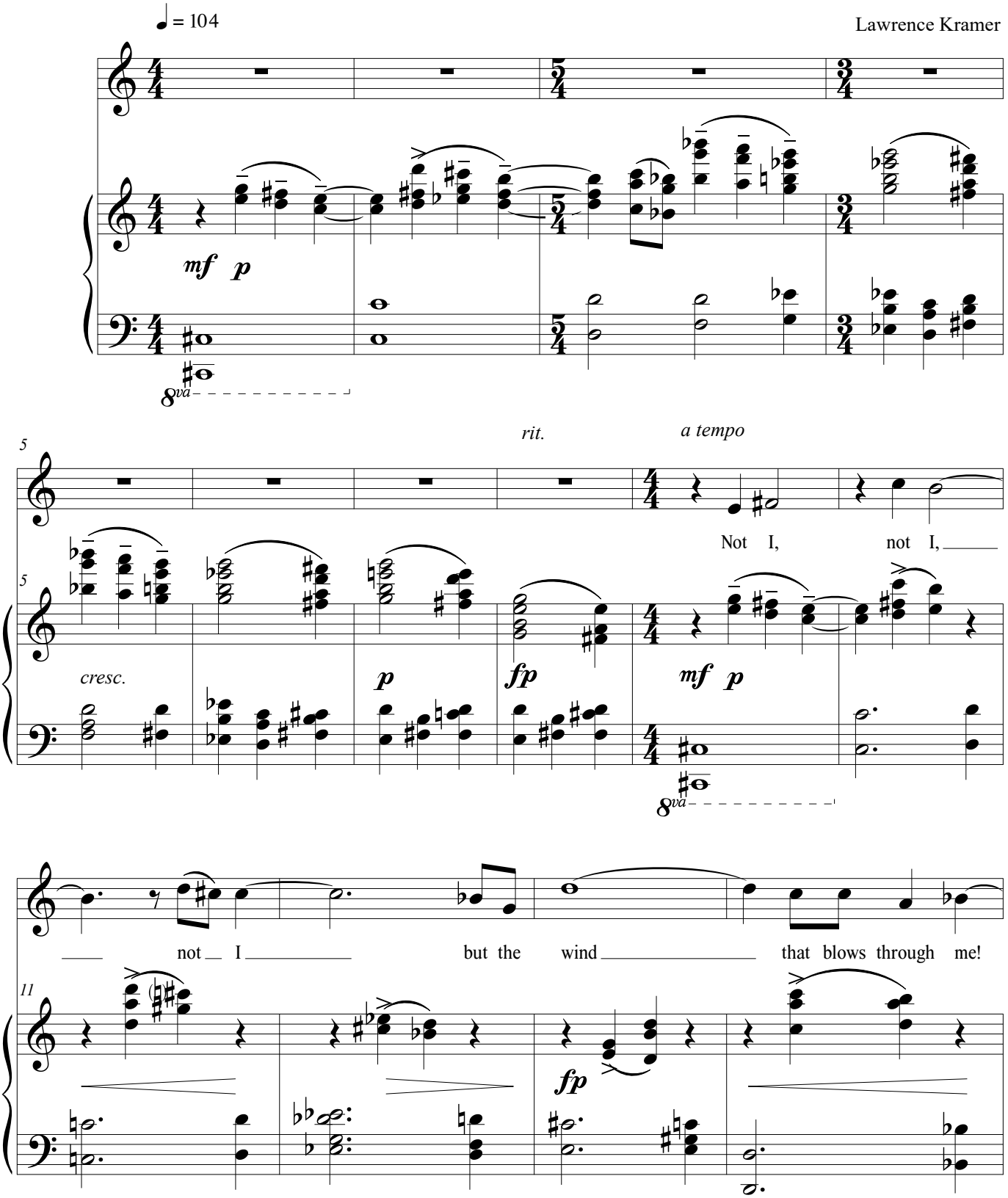
No, no, it is the three strange angels.
Admit them, admit them.

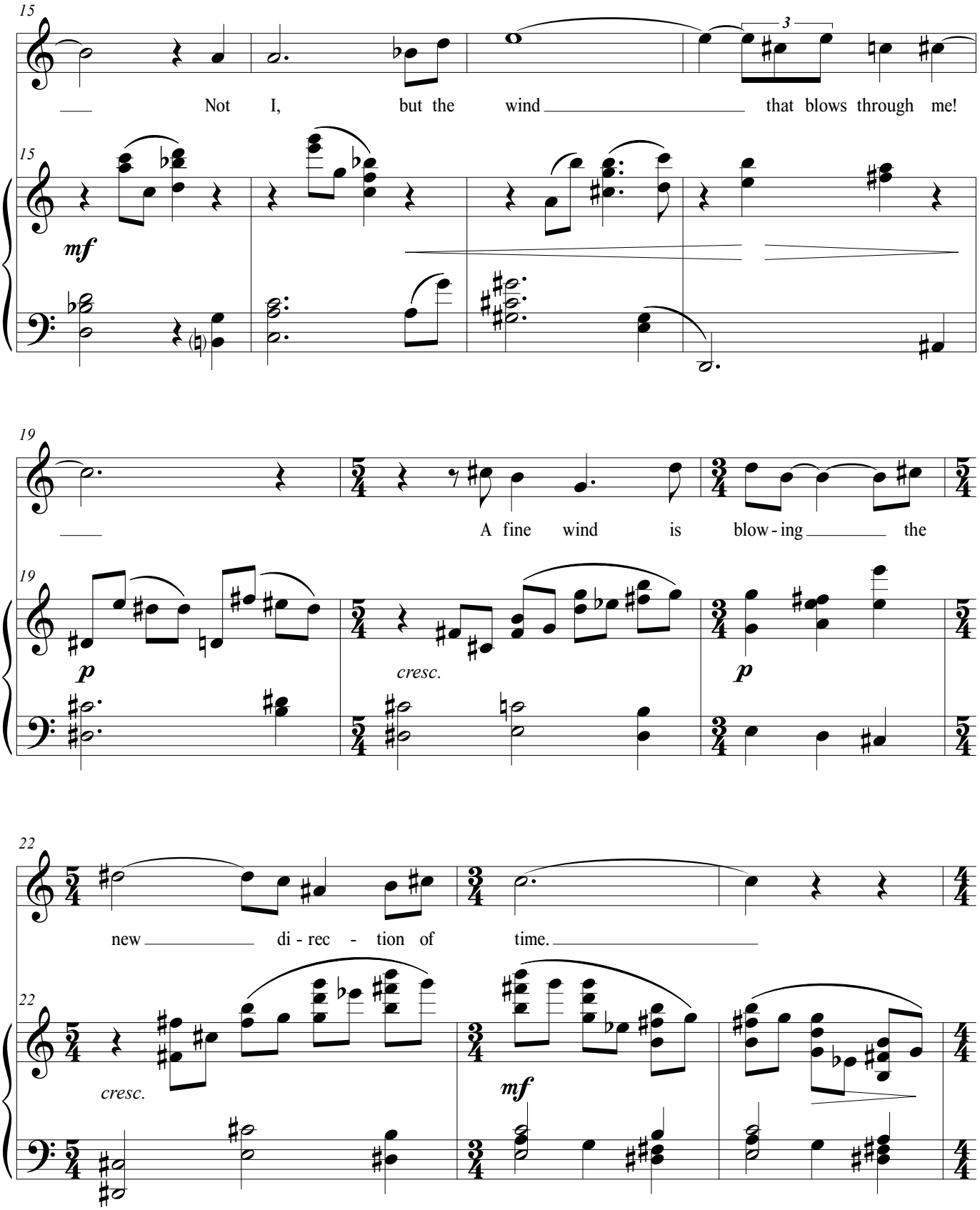
--D. H. Lawrence

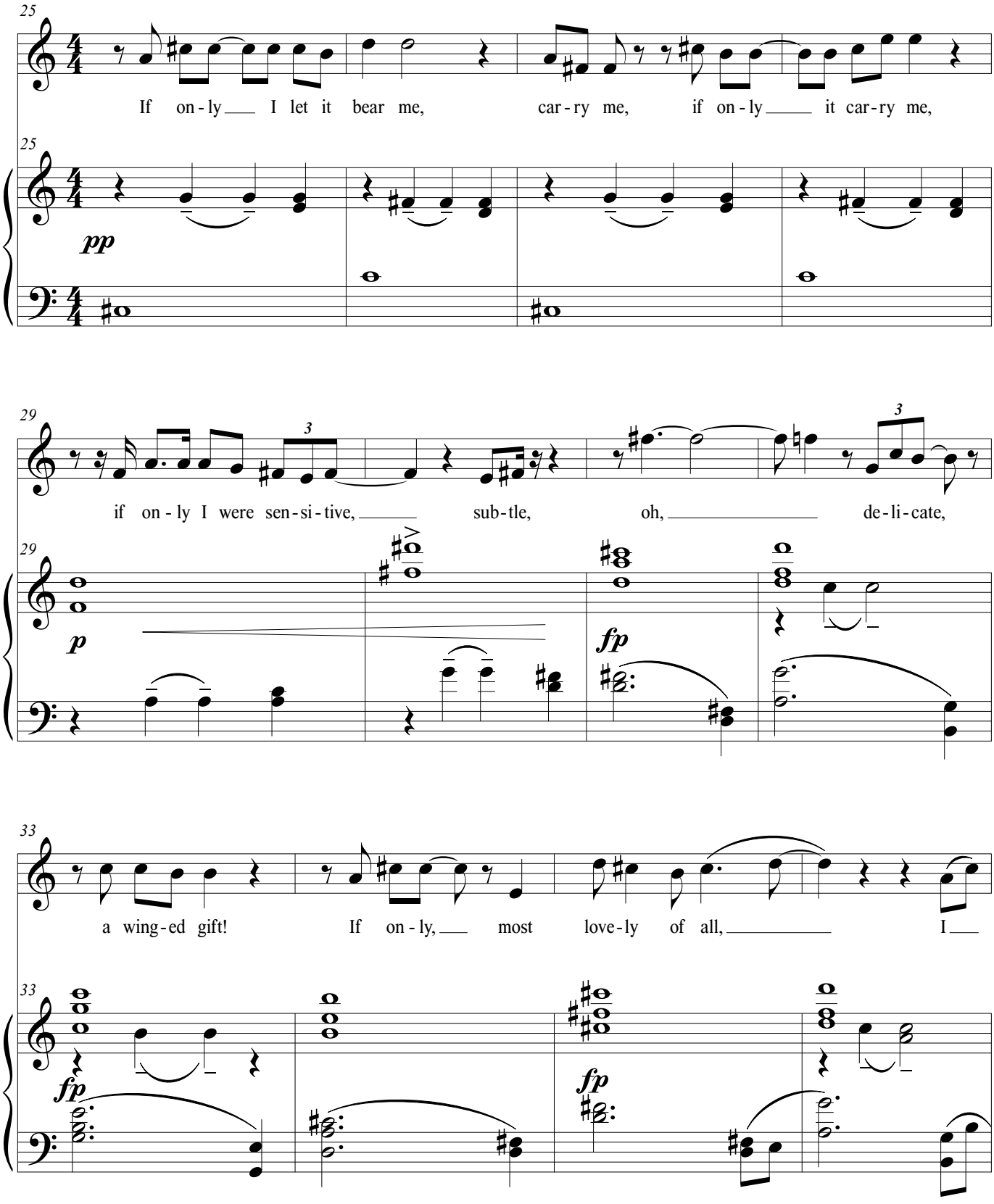
Written voice range: C4 - G5
Tessitura: E4 - D5
Duration: 7 minutes

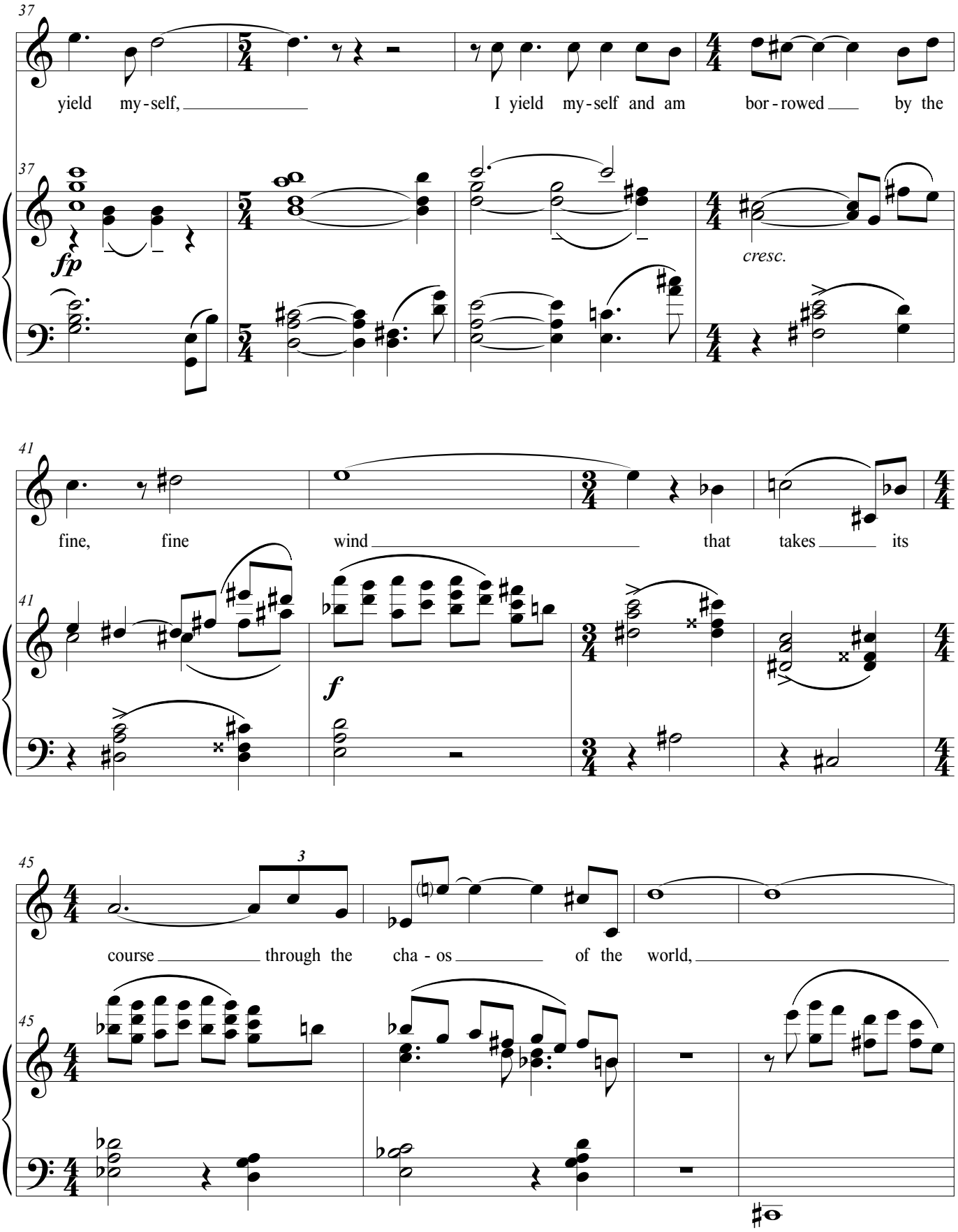
Composed 2016

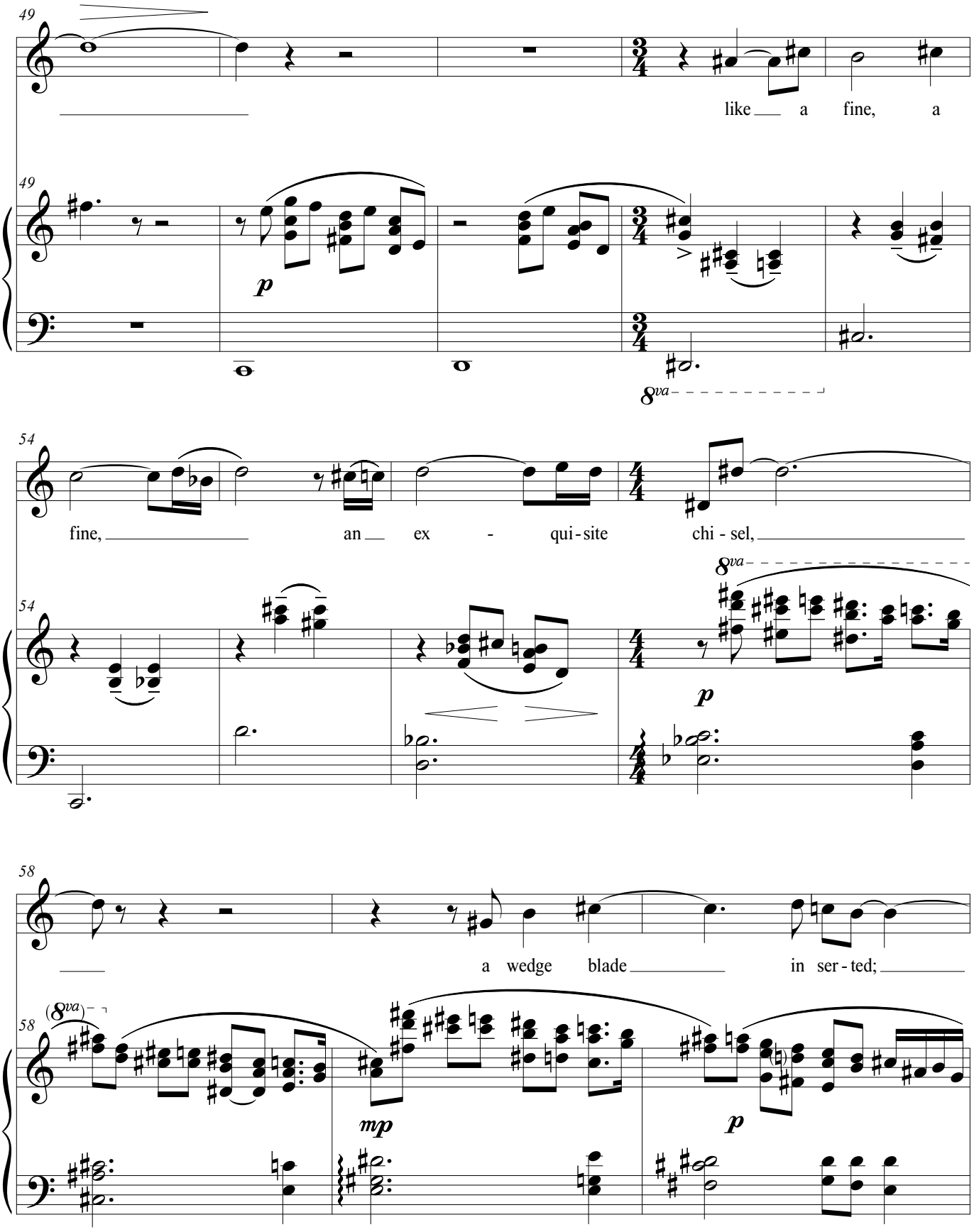
Look! We Have Come Through.

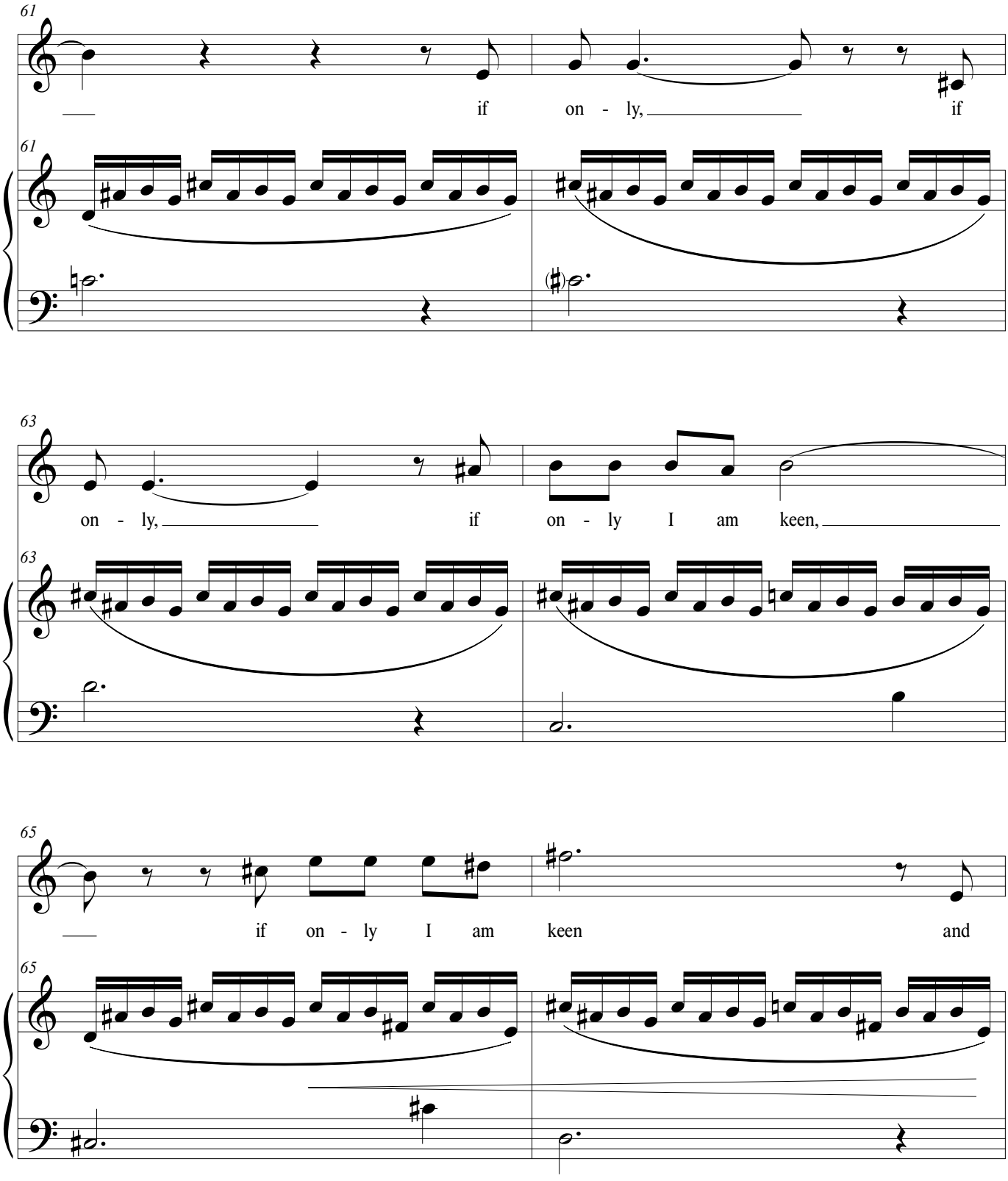


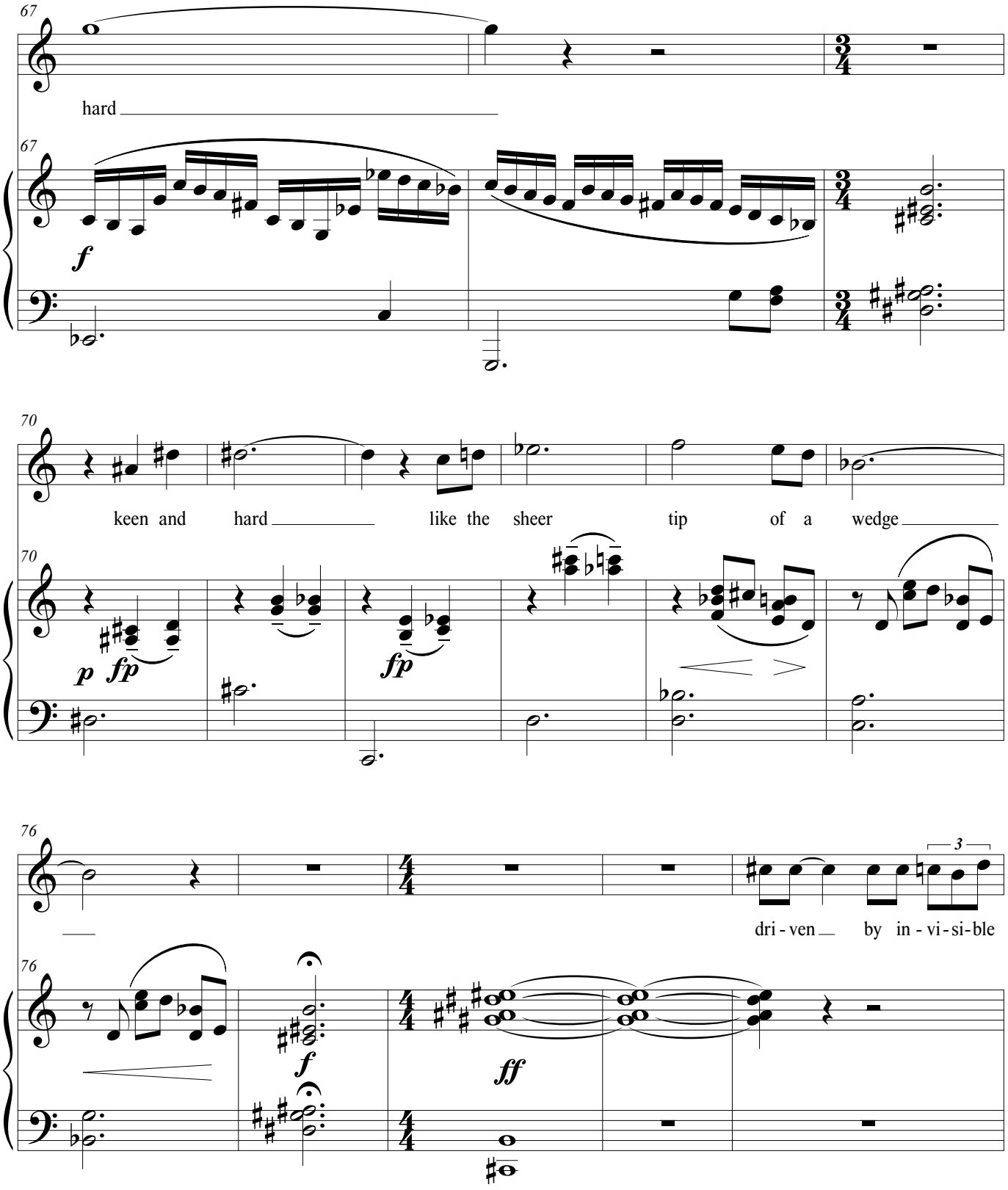

15
Not I, but the wind that blows through me!
mf
19
A fine wind is blow - ing the
p
cresc.
p
22
new di - rec - tion of time.
cresc.
mf

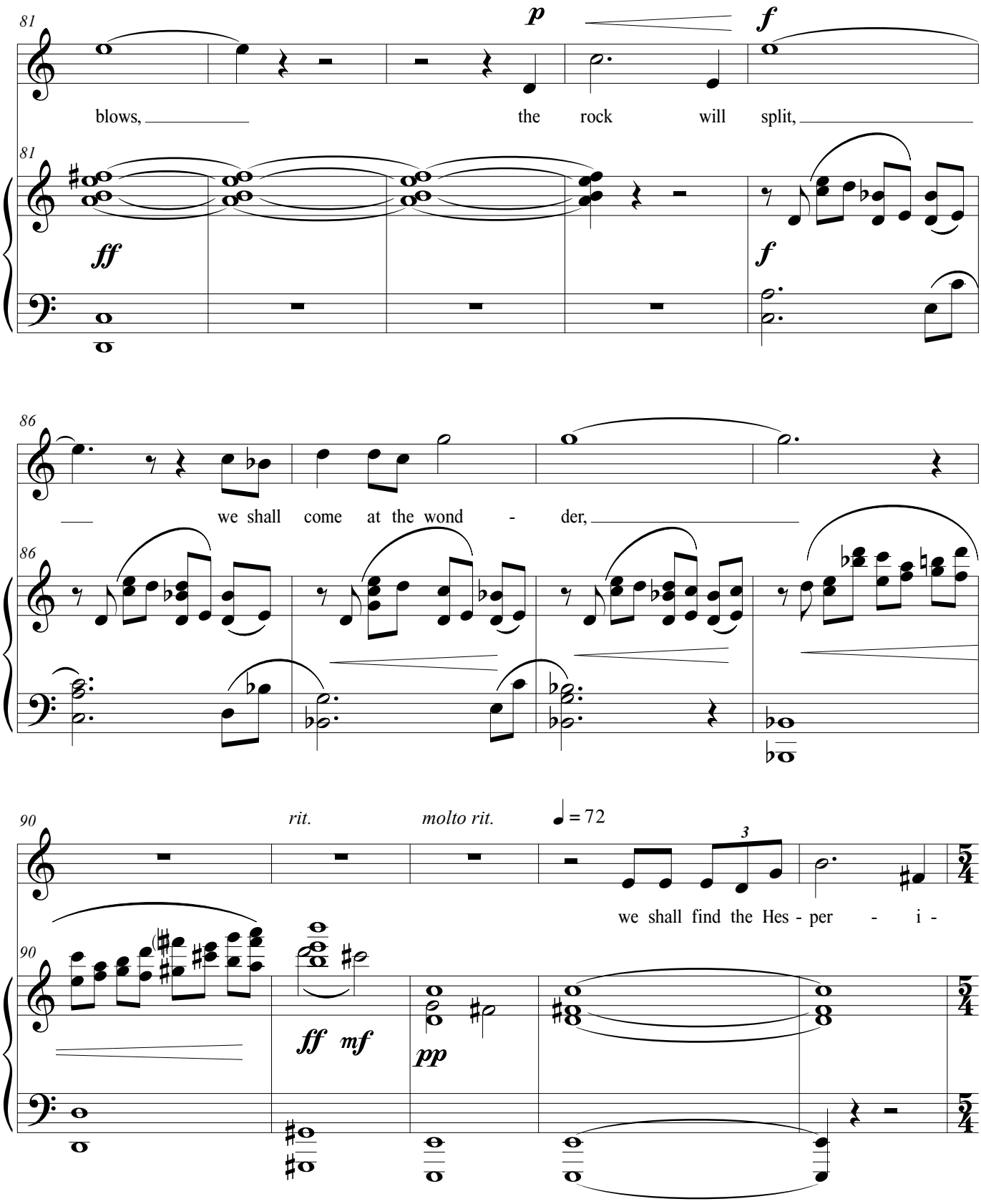

25
If on - ly I let it bear me, car - ry me, if on - ly it car - ry me,
pp
29
if on - ly I were sen - si - tive, sub - tle, oh, de - li - cate,
p
fp
33
a wing - ed gift! If on - ly, most love - ly of all, I
fp
fp

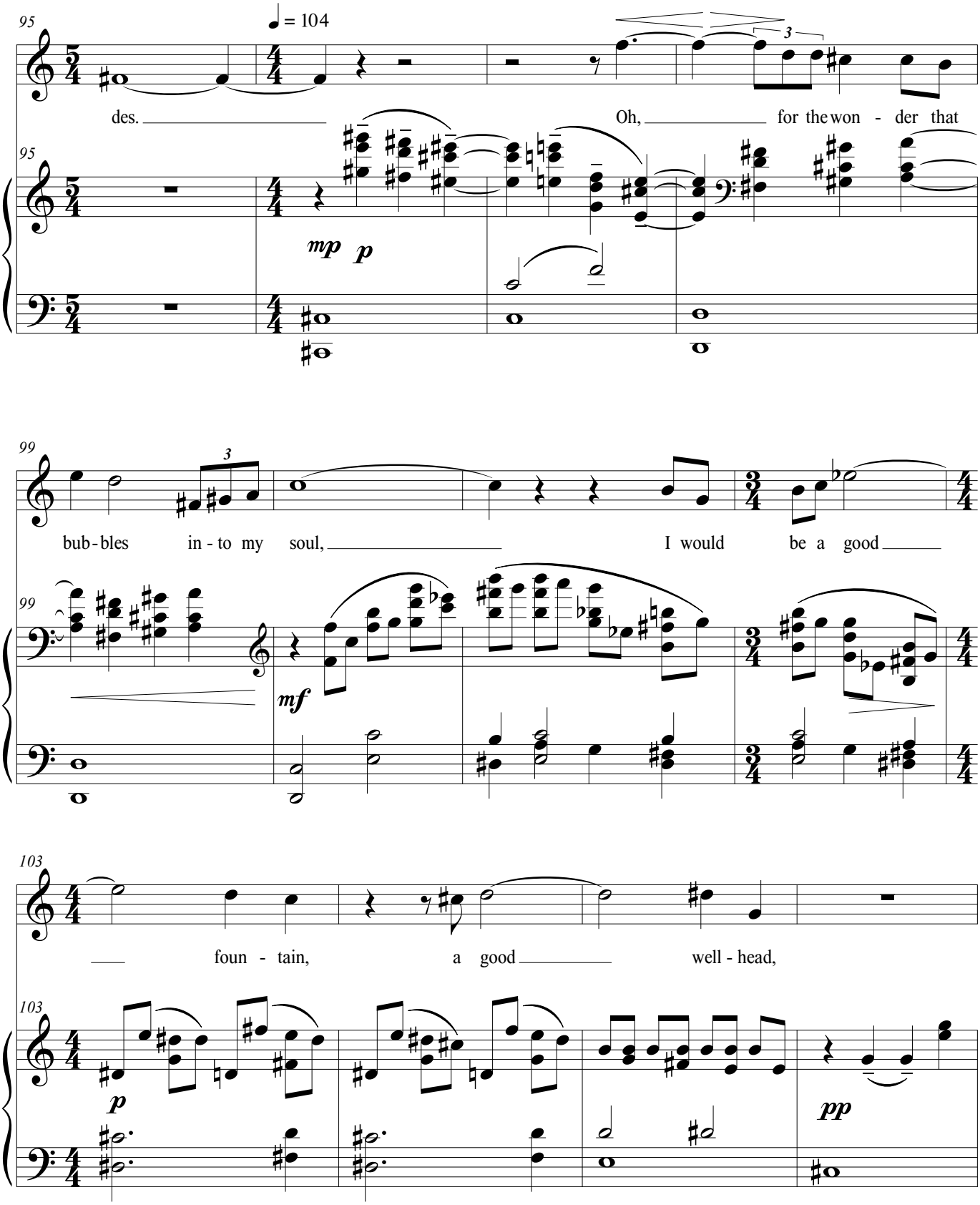

37
yield my-self, I yield my-self and am bor-rowed by the
fp
cresc.
41
fine, fine wind that takes its
f
45
course through the cha-os of the world,

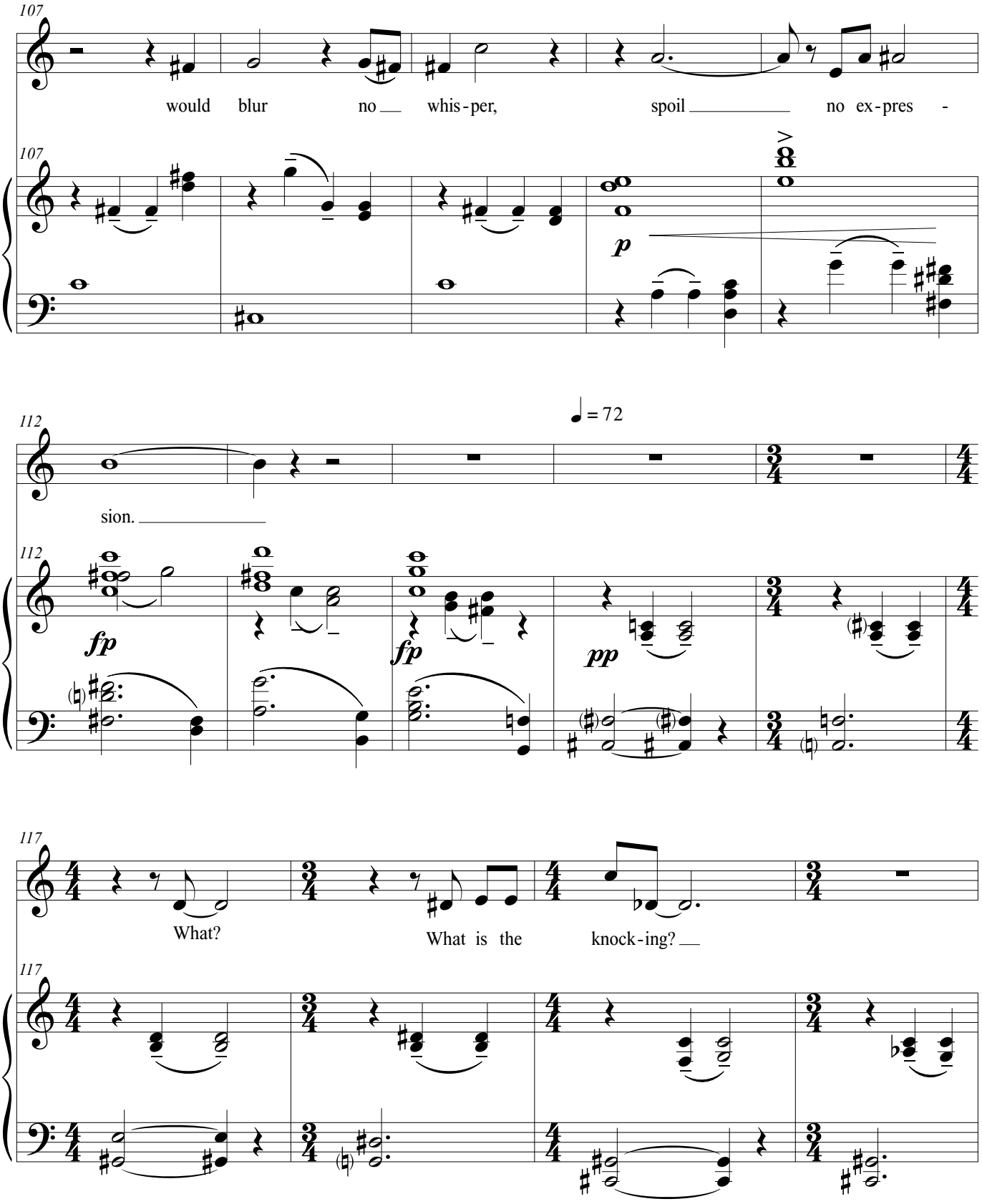

49
like a fine, a
49
p
8va
54
fine, an ex - qui - site chi - sel,
54
8va
p
58
a wedge blade in ser - ted;
58
(8va)
mp
p

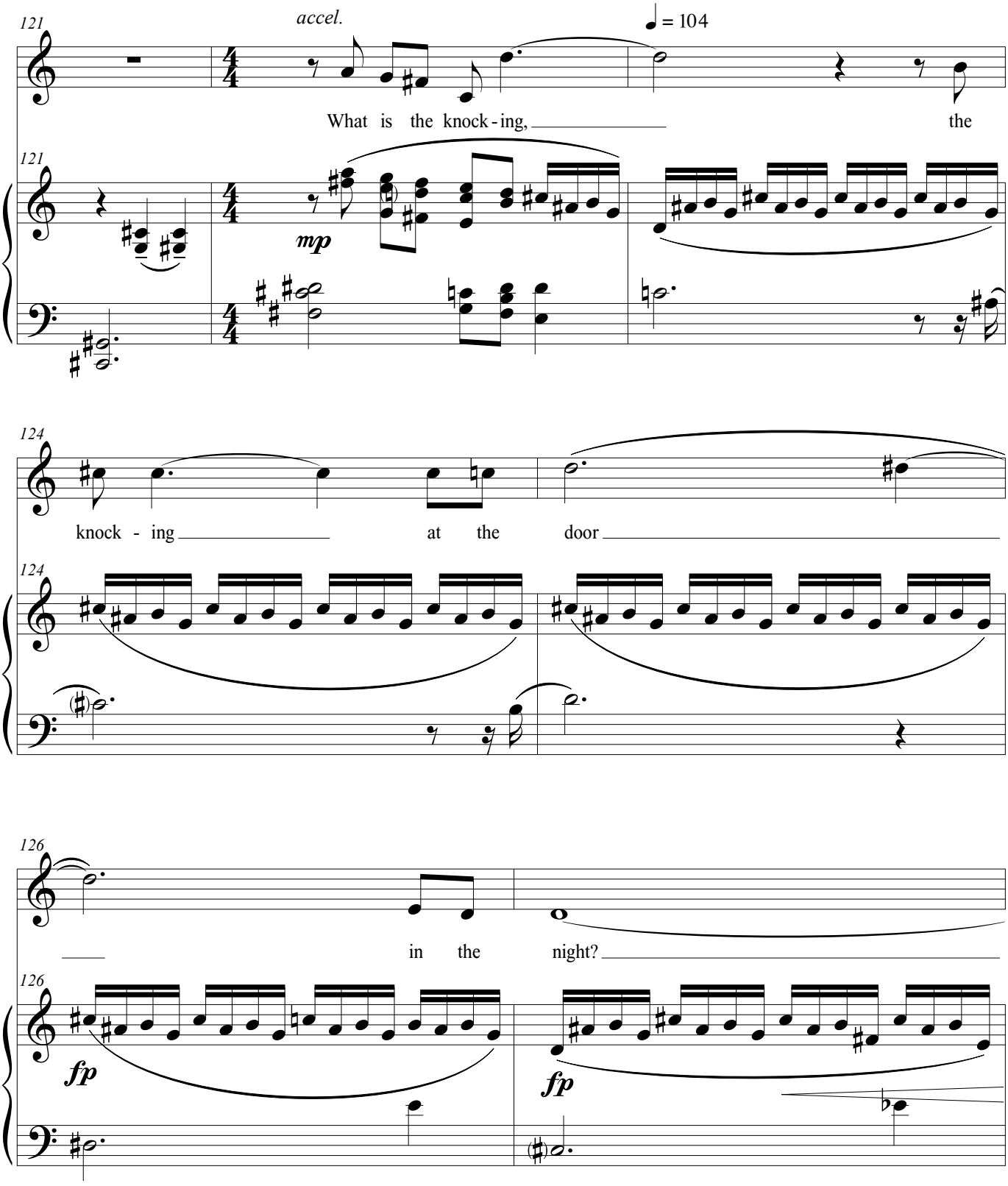

61
if on - ly, if
61
63
on - ly, if on - ly I am keen,
63
65
if on - ly I am keen and
65

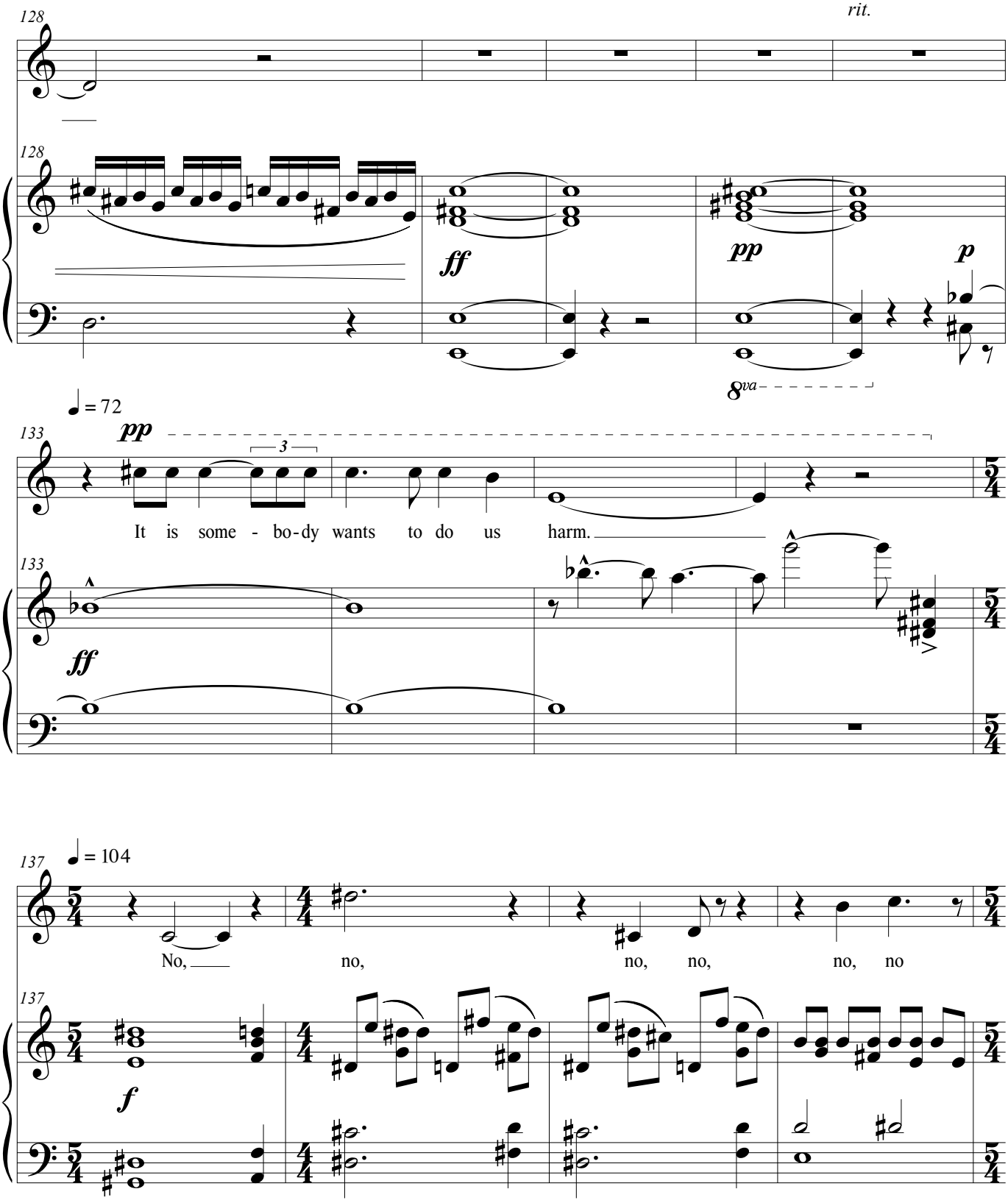

67
hard
67
f
70
keen and hard like the sheer tip of a wedge
70
p fp
fp
76
3
dri - ven by in - vi - si - ble
76
f
ff

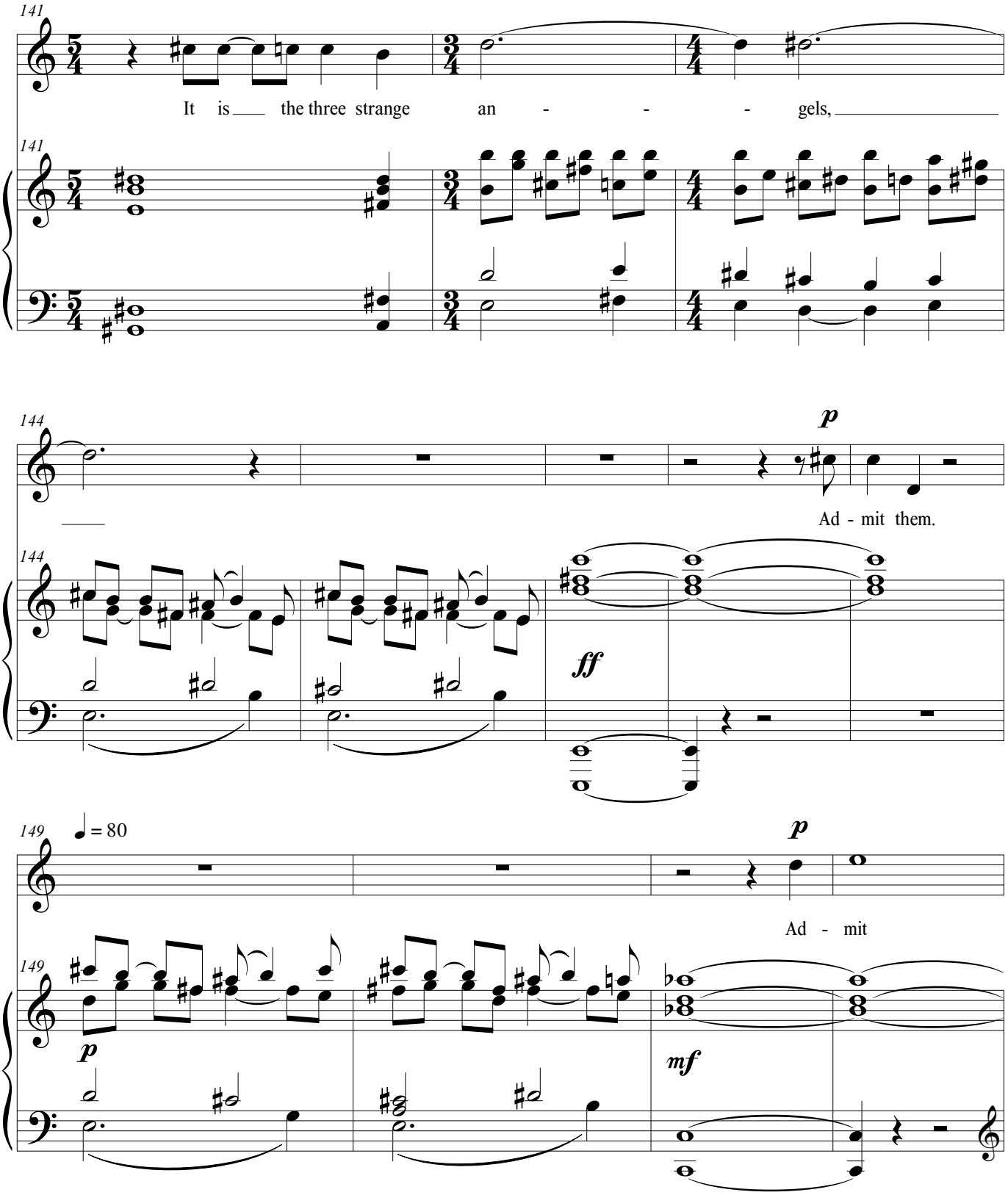

81
p
f
blows, the rock will split,
81
ff
f
86
we shall come at the wond - der,
86
90
rit.
molto rit.
♩ = 72
3
we shall find the Hes - per - i -
90
ff mf
pp

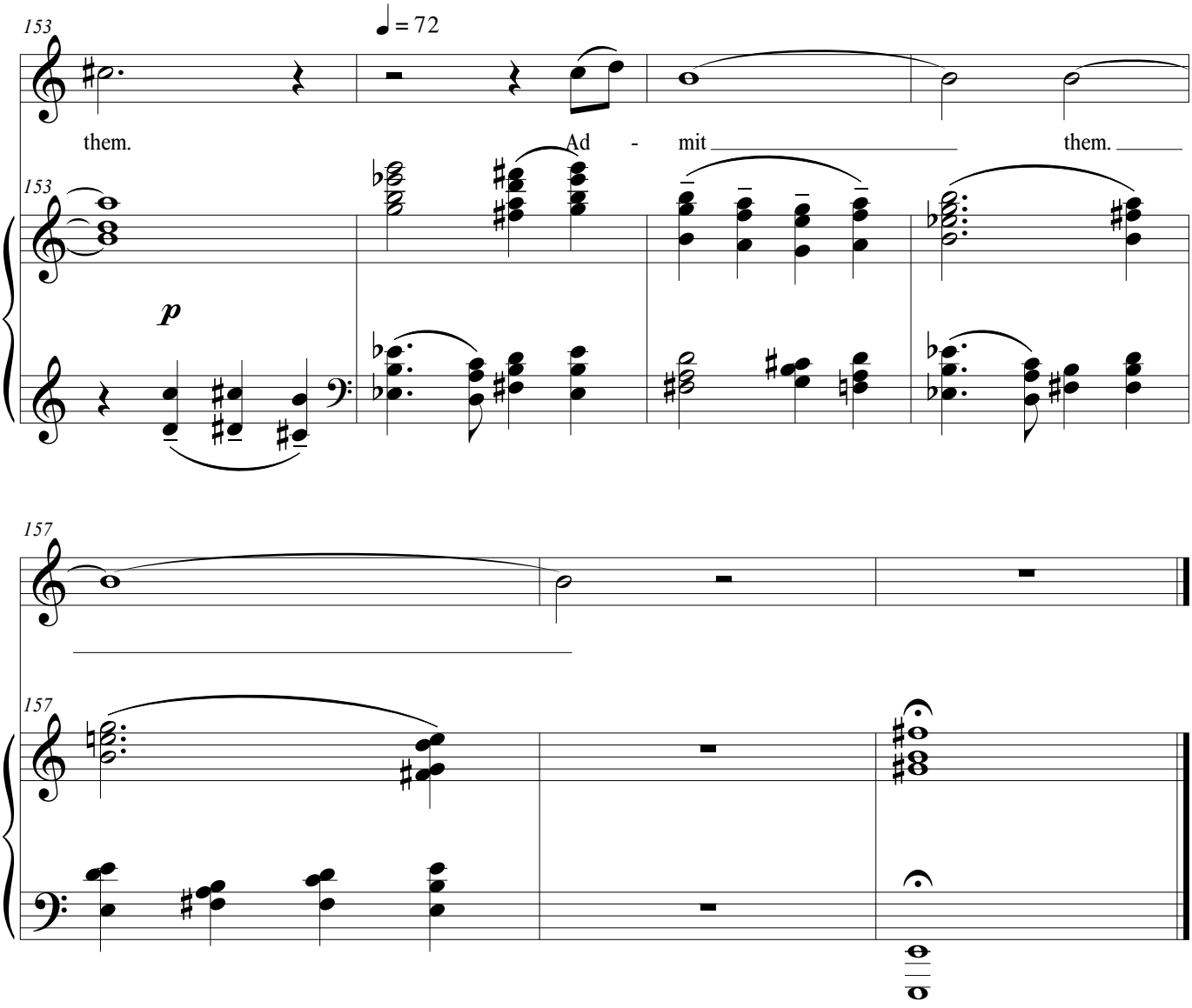

95
♩ = 104
des.
Oh,
for the won - der that
mp
p
99
bub - bles
in - to my
soul,
I would
be a
good
mf
103
foun - tain,
a good
well - head,
p
pp


107
would blur no whis-per, spoil no ex-pres -
107
p
112
sion.
112
fp
fp
pp
♩ = 72
117
What?
What is the knock-ing?
117


121
accel.
♩ = 104
What is the knock - ing, the
121
mp
124
knock - ing at the door
124
126
in the night?
126
fp
fp


128
rit.
128
ff
pp
p
8va
♩ = 72
133
pp
3
It is some - bo-dy wants to do us harm.
133
ff
137
♩ = 104
No, no, no, no, no, no
137
f


141
It is the three strange an - - - gels,
141
144
p
Ad - mit them.
144
ff
149
♩ = 80
p
Ad - mit
149
p
mf


153
♩ = 72
them.
Ad - mit
them.
153
p
157
157

May Day

High Voice

A delicate fabric of bird song
Floats in the air,
The smell of wet wild earth
Is everywhere.

Red small leaves of the maple
Are clenched like a hand,
[Half-bent with anticipation]
The pear trees stand.

Oh I must pass nothing by
[And think nothing too] much,
The raindrop try with my lips,
The grass with my touch;

For how can I be sure
I shall see again
The world on the first of May
Shining after the rain?

--Sara Teasdale

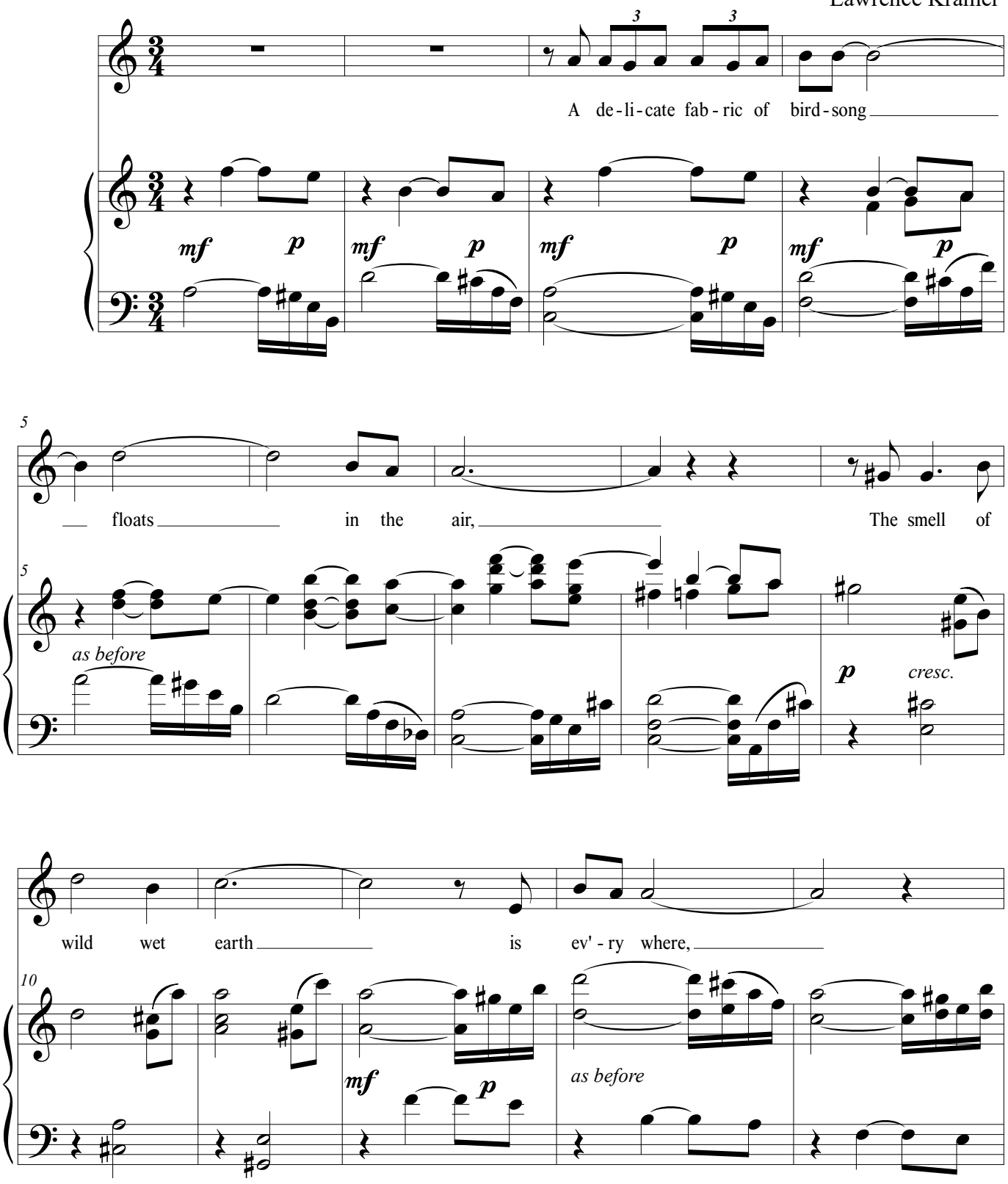
Written voice range: E♭4 - G♯5
Tessitura: A4 - F5
Duration 3:20

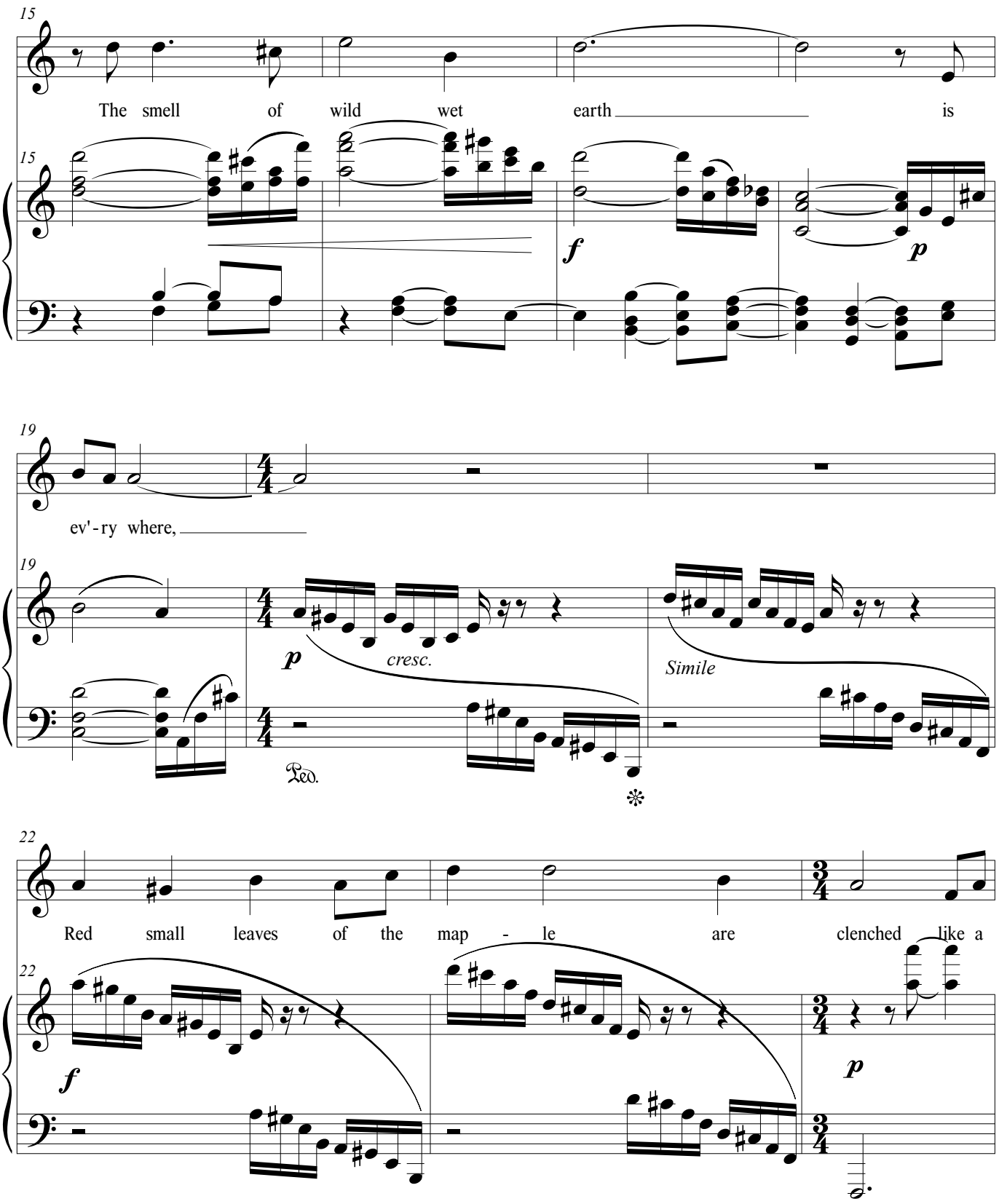
Composed 2017

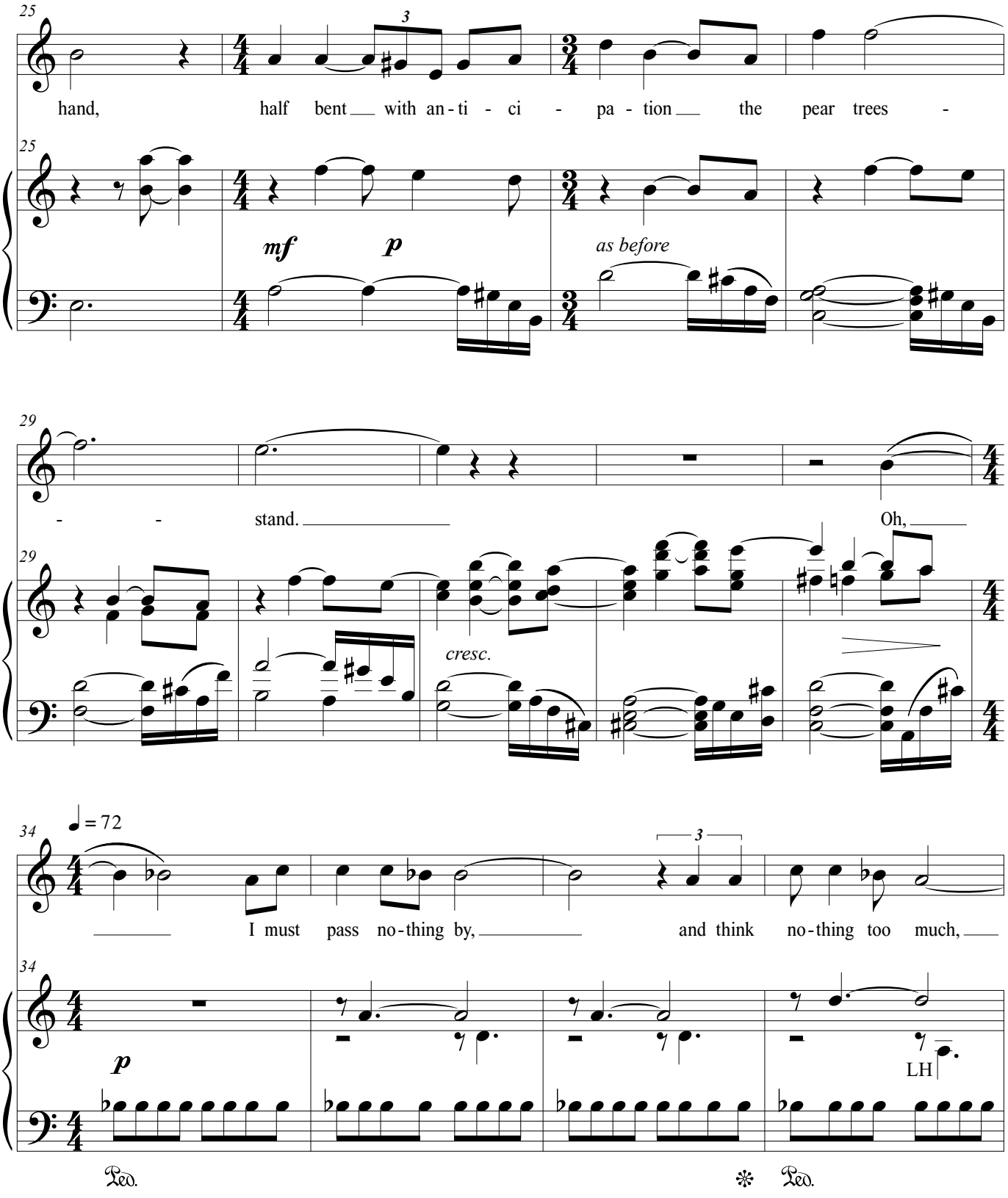
May Day

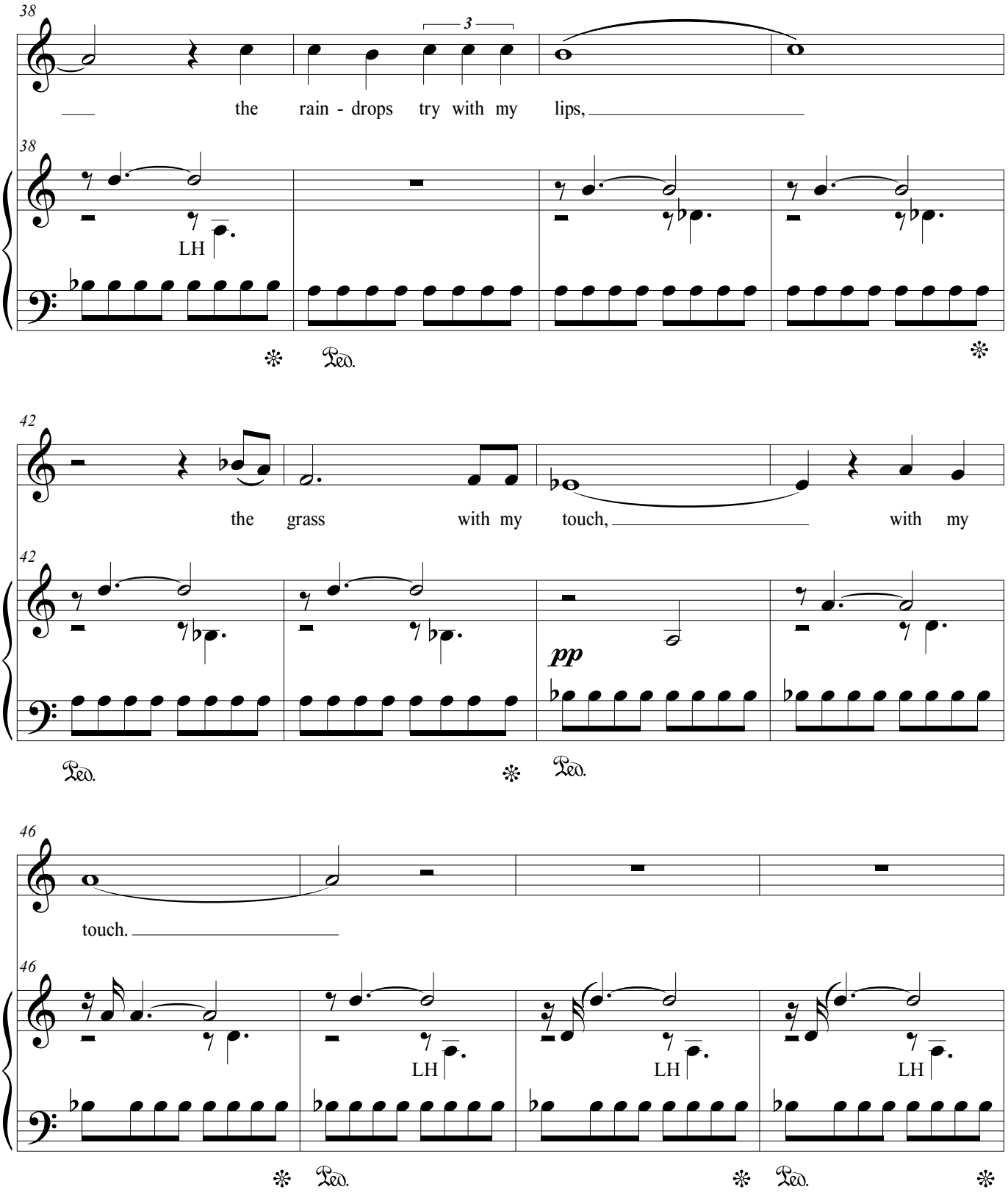
♩ = 80

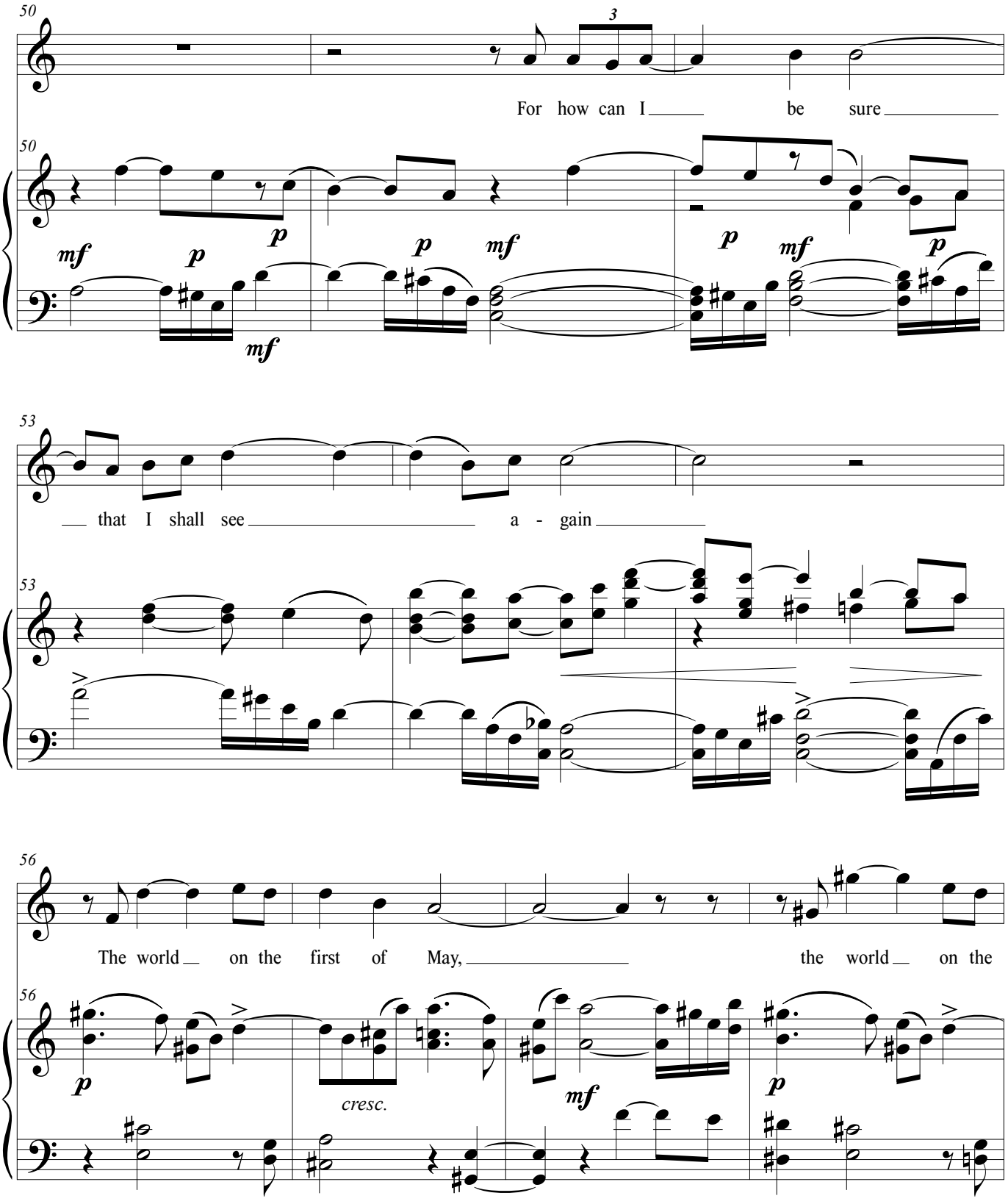
Lawrence Kramer

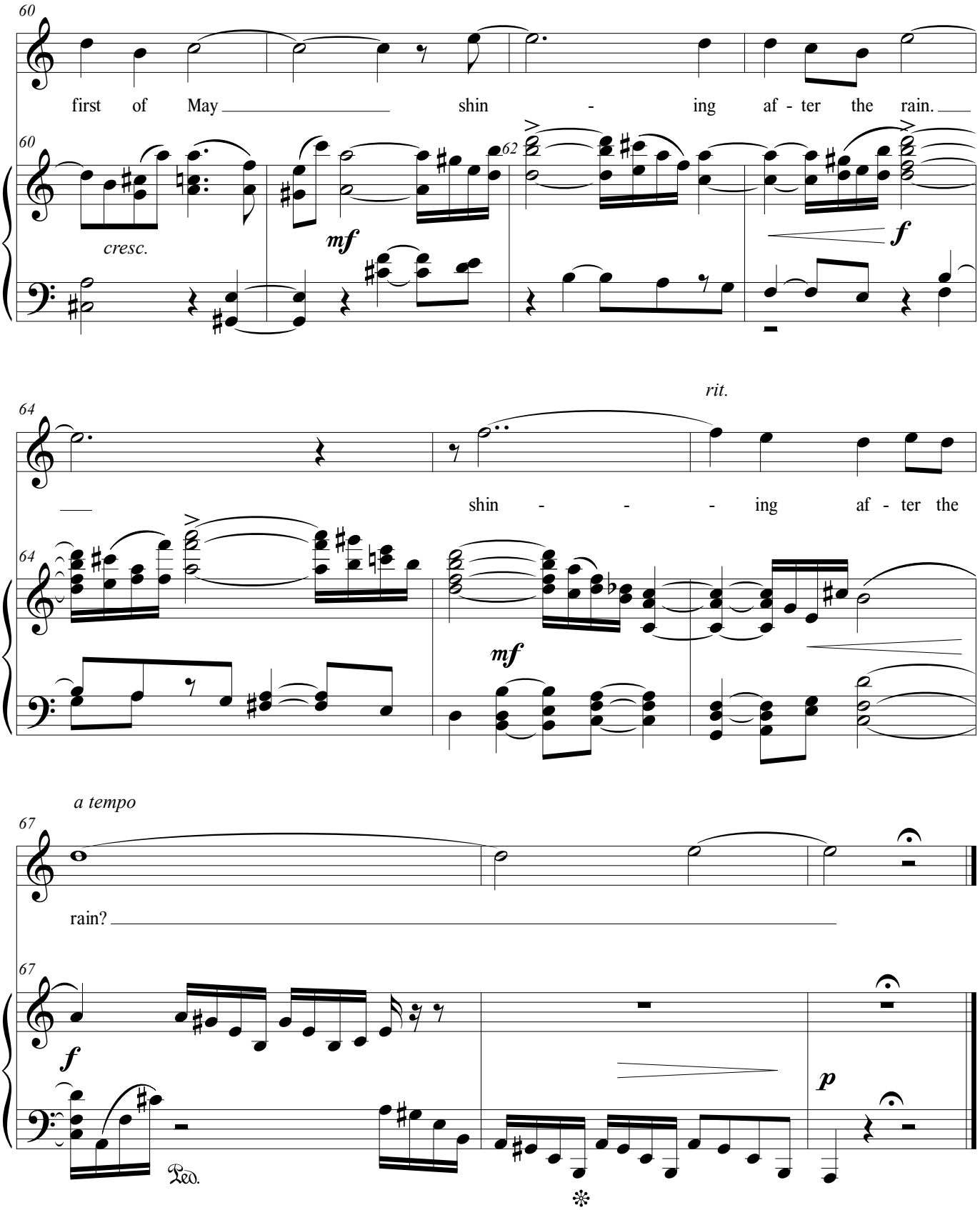



15
The smell of wild wet earth is
15
f
p
19
ev'-ry where,
19
p
cresc.
Simile
Ped.
22
Red small leaves of the map - le are clenched like a
22
f
p


25
hand, half bent with an - ti - ci - pa - tion the pear trees -
mf p
as before
29
- - stand. Oh,
cresc.
34
♩ = 72
I must pass no - thing by, and think no - thing too much,
p
LH
Ped. Ped.


38
3
the rain - drops try with my lips,
LH
Ped.
42
the grass with my touch, with my
pp
Ped.
46
touch.
LH
Ped.


50
3
For how can I be sure
50
mf p p mf p mf p mf
53
that I shall see a - gain
53
56
The world on the first of May, the world on the
56
p cresc. mf p


60
first of May shin - ing af - ter the rain.
60
62
cresc.
mf
f
64
rit.
shin - - - ing af - ter the
64
mf
a tempo
67
rain?
67
f
p
Ped.
*

On the Way

The trees fret fitfully and twist,
  Shutters rattle and carpets heave,
  Slime is the dust of yestereve,
    And in the streaming mist
Fishes might seem to fin a passage if they list.

      But to his feet,
      Drawing nigh and nigher
      A hidden seat,
      The fog is sweet
      And the wind a lyre.

  A vacant sameness grays the sky,
  A moisture gathers on each knop
  Of the bramble, rounding to a drop,
    That greets the goer-by
With the cold listless lustre of a dead man's eye.

      But to her sight,
      Drawing nigh and nigher
      Its deep delight,
      The fog is bright
      And the wind a lyre.

--Thomas Hardy

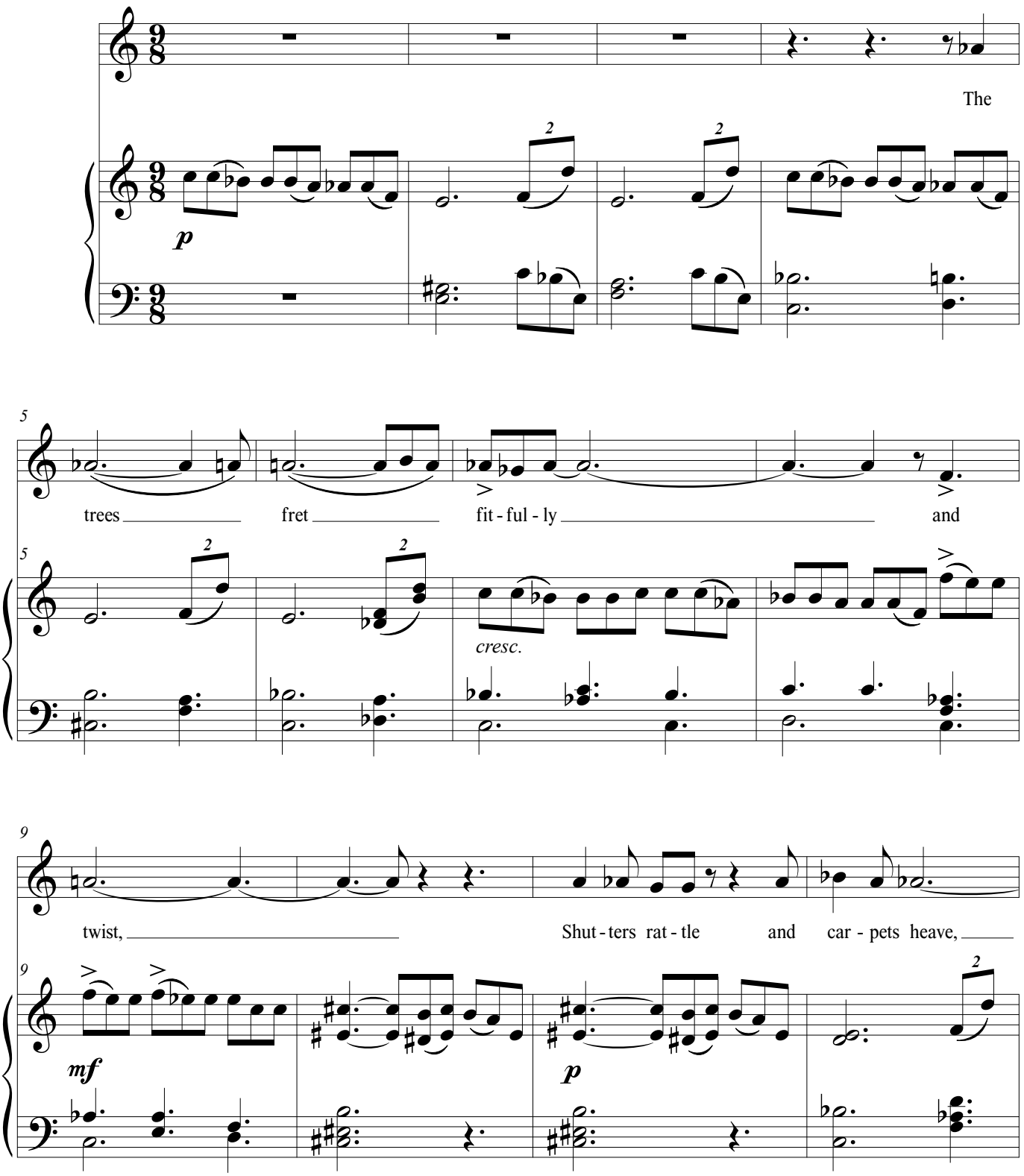
Written Voice Range: E4 - F5
Tessitura: G4 - D5
Duration 4:15

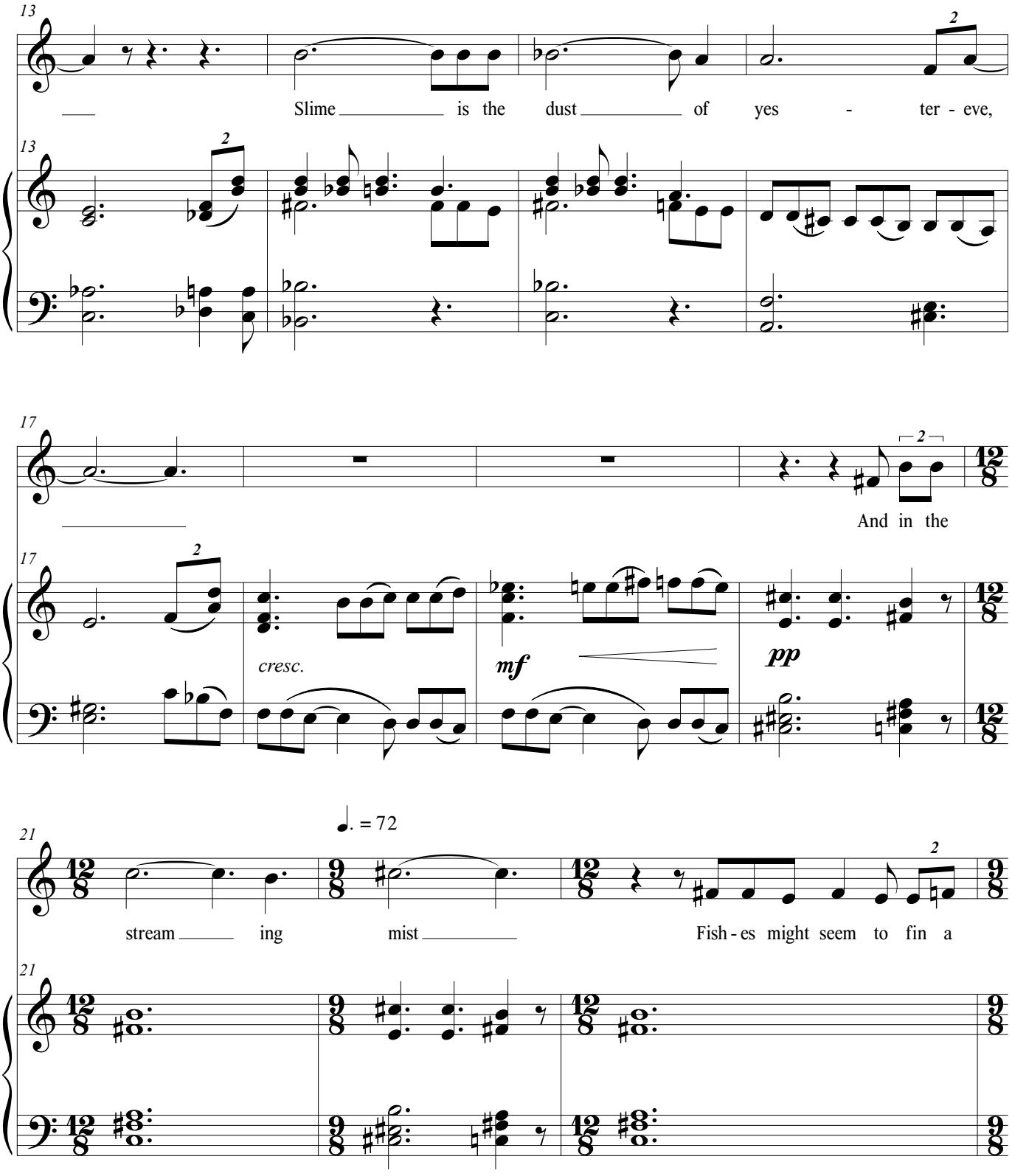
Composed 2021

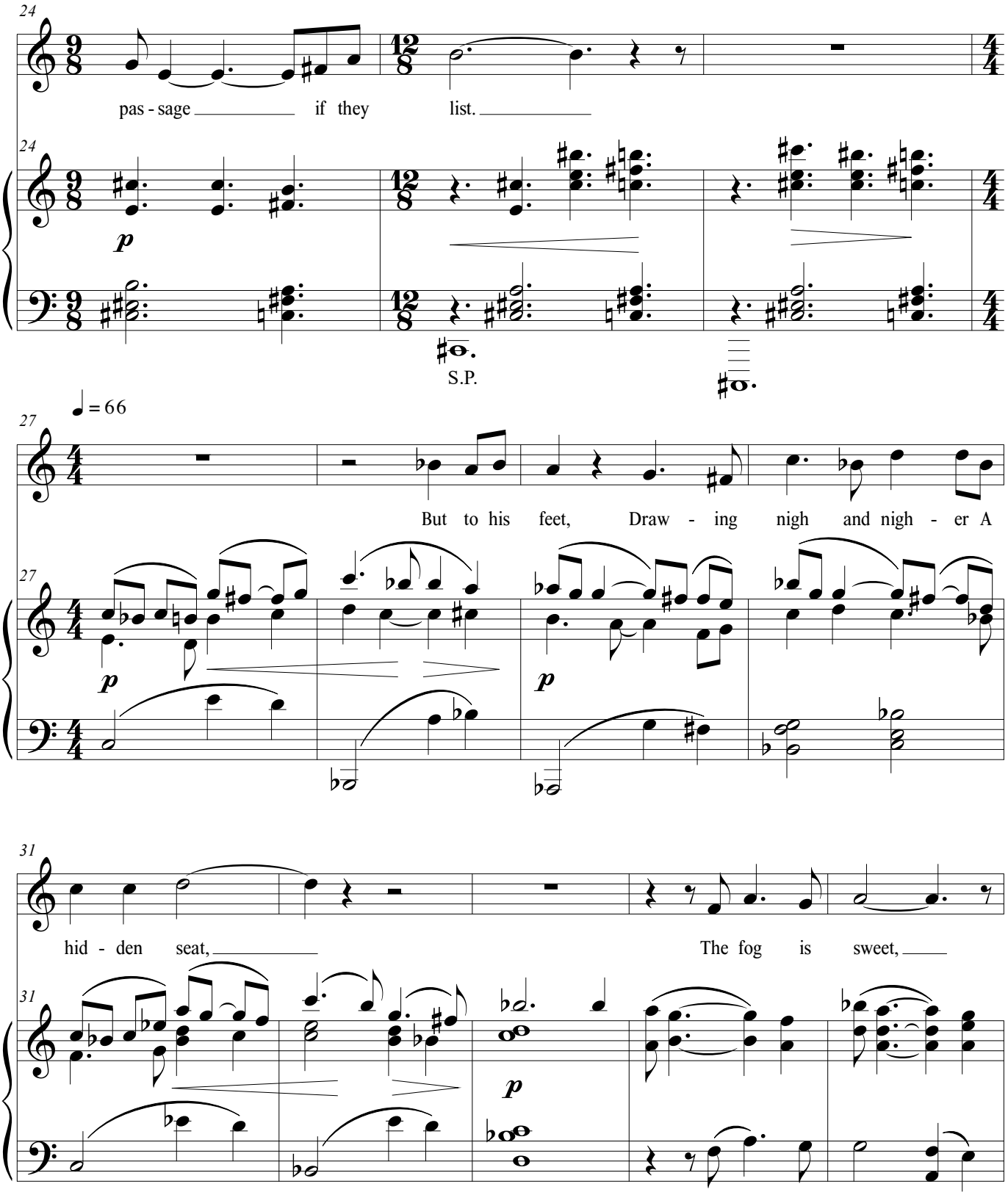
On the Way

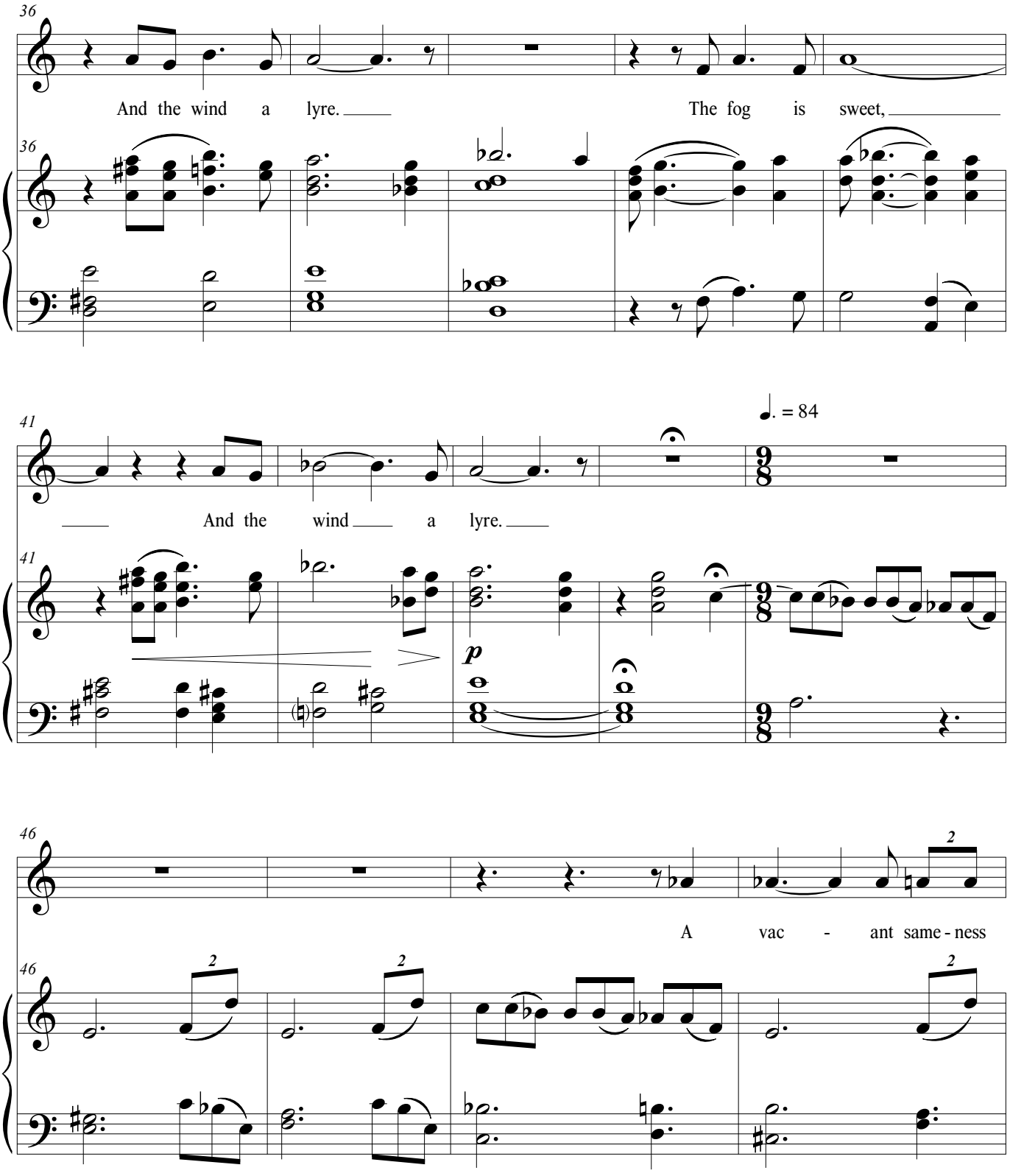
♩. = 84

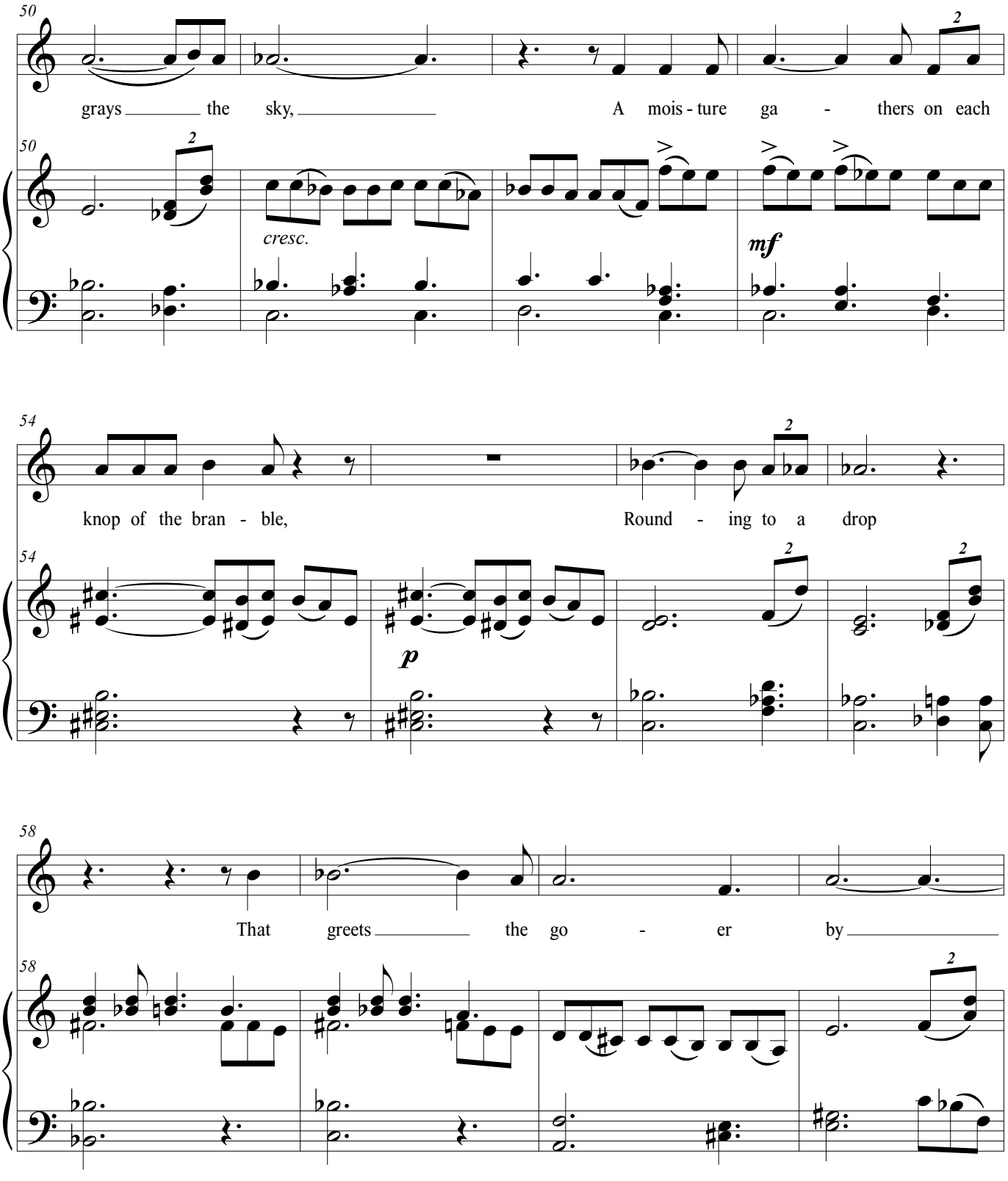
Lawrence Kramer

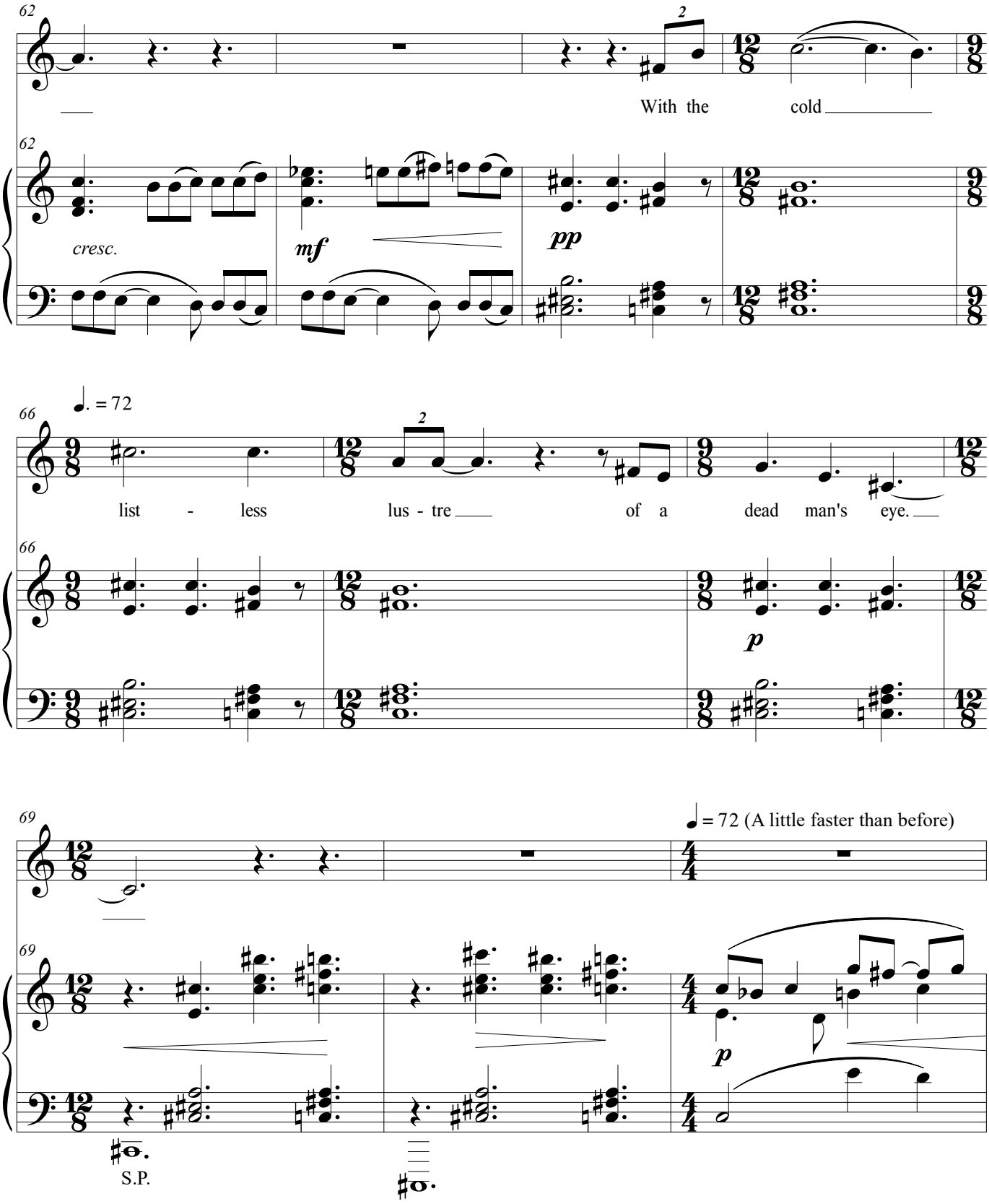


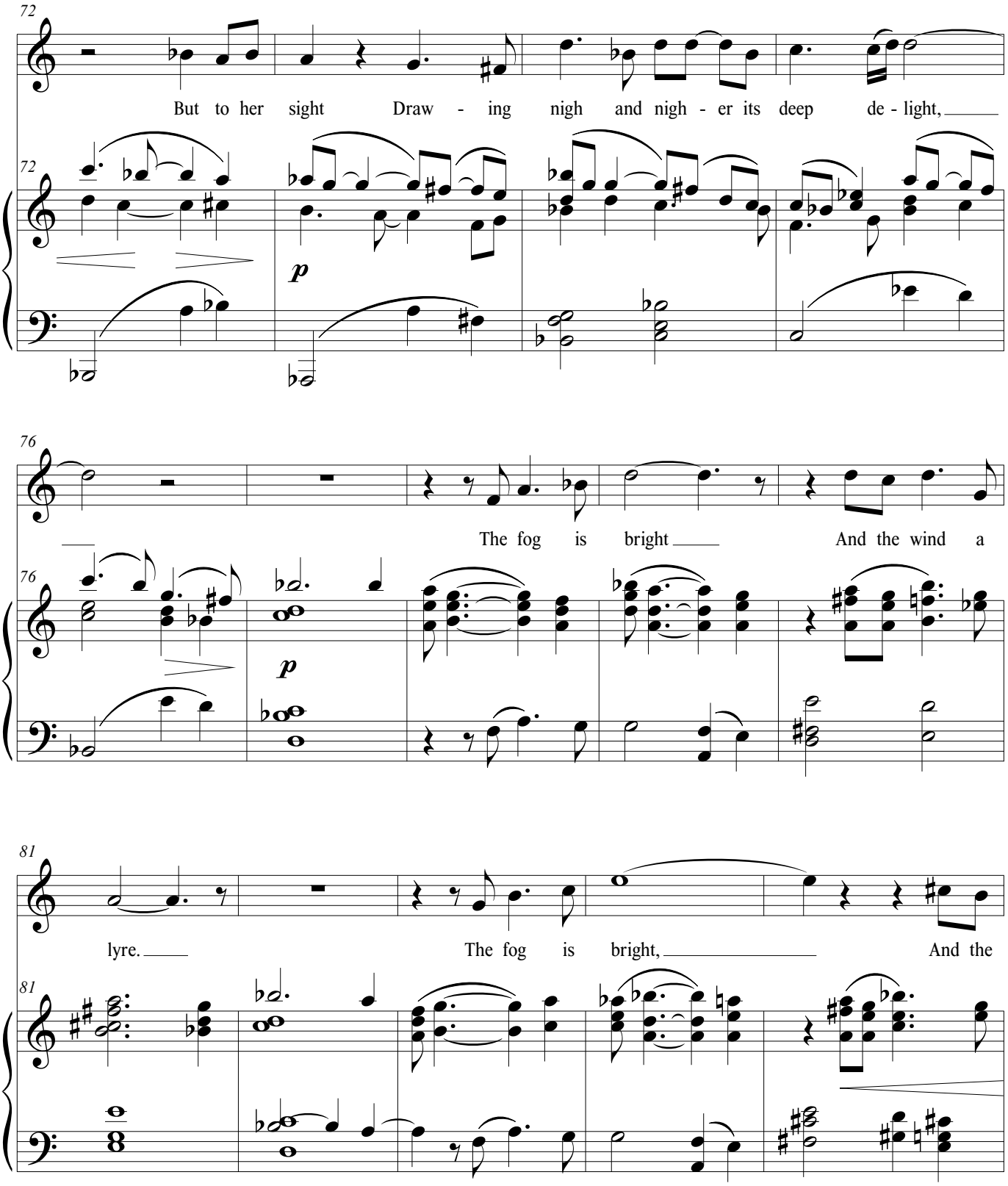

13
Slime is the dust of yes - ter - eve,
17
And in the
cresc.
mf
pp
21
♩. = 72
stream ing mist
Fish - es might seem to fin a

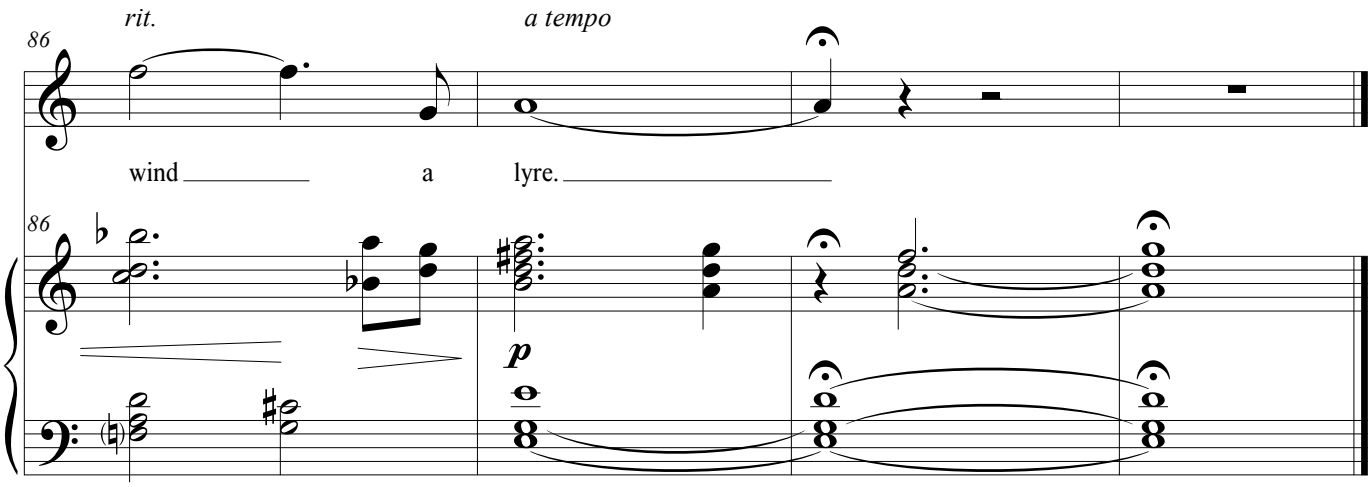

24
pas - sage if they list.
p
S.P.
27
♩ = 66
But to his feet, Draw - ing nigh and nigh - er A
p
p
31
hid - den seat, The fog is sweet,
p


36
And the wind a lyre.
The fog is sweet,
41
And the wind a lyre.
♩. = 84
p
46
A vac - ant same - ness
2


50
grays the sky, A mois - ture ga - thers on each
cresc.
mf
54
knop of the bran - ble, Round - ing to a drop
p
58
That greets the go - er by


62
With the cold
cresc.
mf
pp
66
♩. = 72
list - less lus - tre of a dead man's eye.
p
69
♩ = 72 (A little faster than before)
p
S.P.


72
But to her sight Draw - ing nigh and nigh - er its deep de - light,
72
p
76
The fog is bright And the wind a
76
p
81
lyre. The fog is bright, And the
81


86
rit.
a tempo
wind
a
lyre.
86
p

Range Finding

High Voice

The battle rent a cobweb diamond-strung
And cut a flower beside a ground bird's nest
Before it stained a single human breast.
The stricken flower bent double and so hung.
And still the bird revisited her young.
A butterfly its fall had dispossessed
A moment sought in air his flower of rest,
Then lightly stooped to it and fluttering clung.

On the bare upland pasture there had spread
O'ernight 'twixt mullein stalks a wheel of thread
And straining cables wet with silver dew.
A sudden passing bullet shook it dry.
The indwelling spider ran to greet the fly,
But finding nothing, sullenly withdrew.

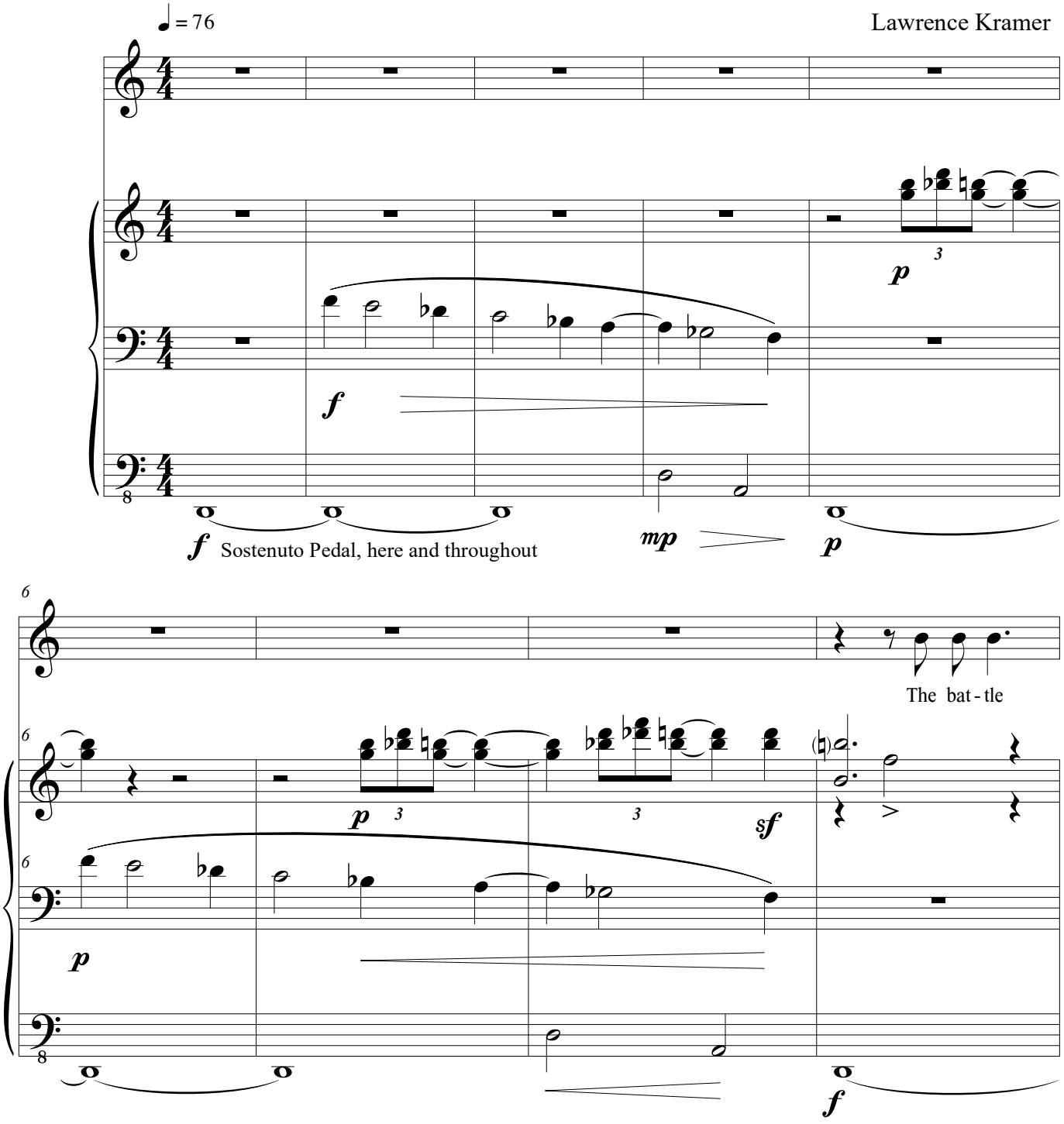
--Robert Frost

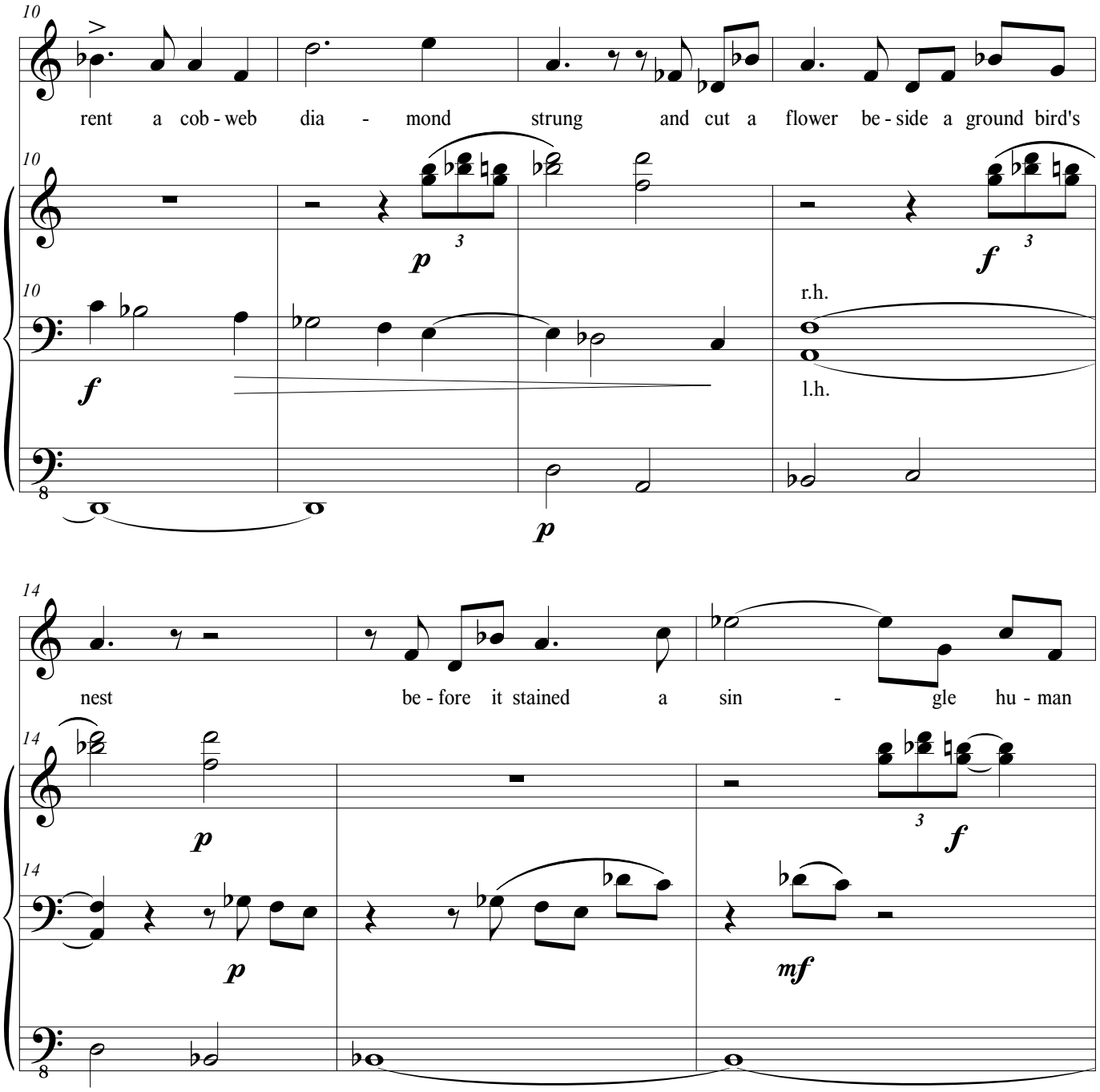
This setting changes the poeticism "O'ernight 'twixt" to "Between the" in keeping with the otherwise modern idiom of the poem (first drafted in 1911).

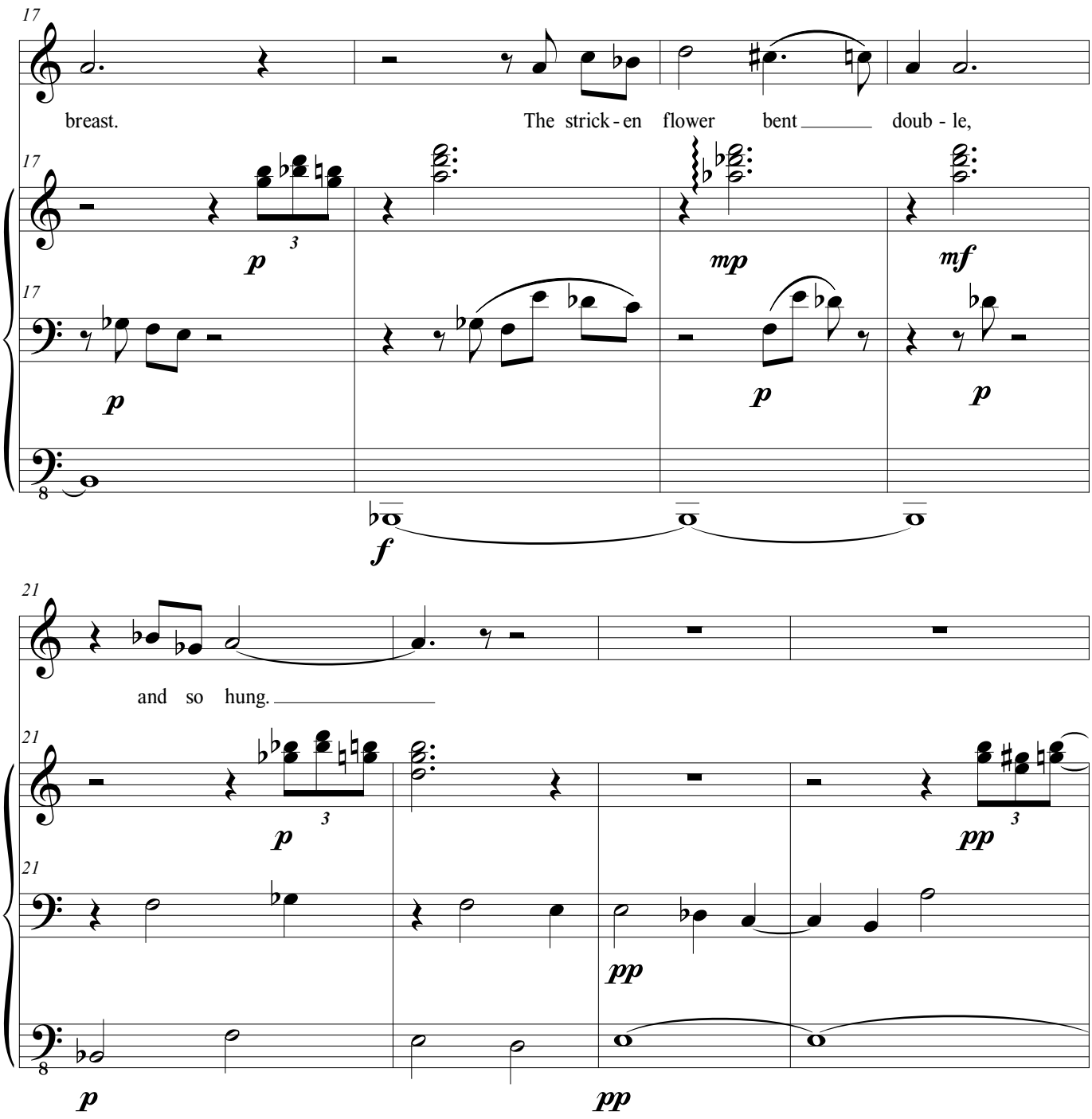
Written voice range: C#4-F5
Tessitura: F4 - E5
Duration: 5:00

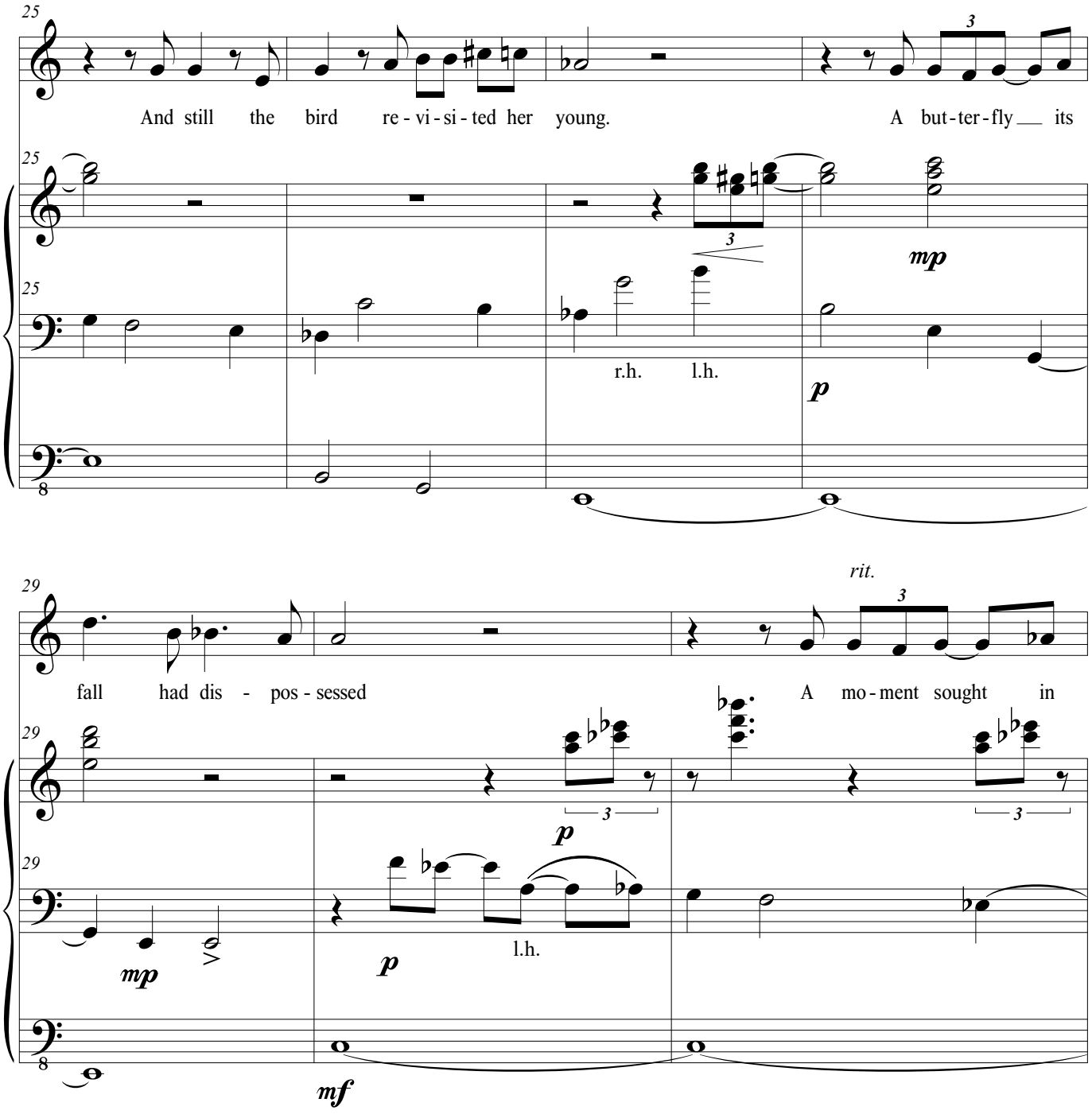
Composed 2016

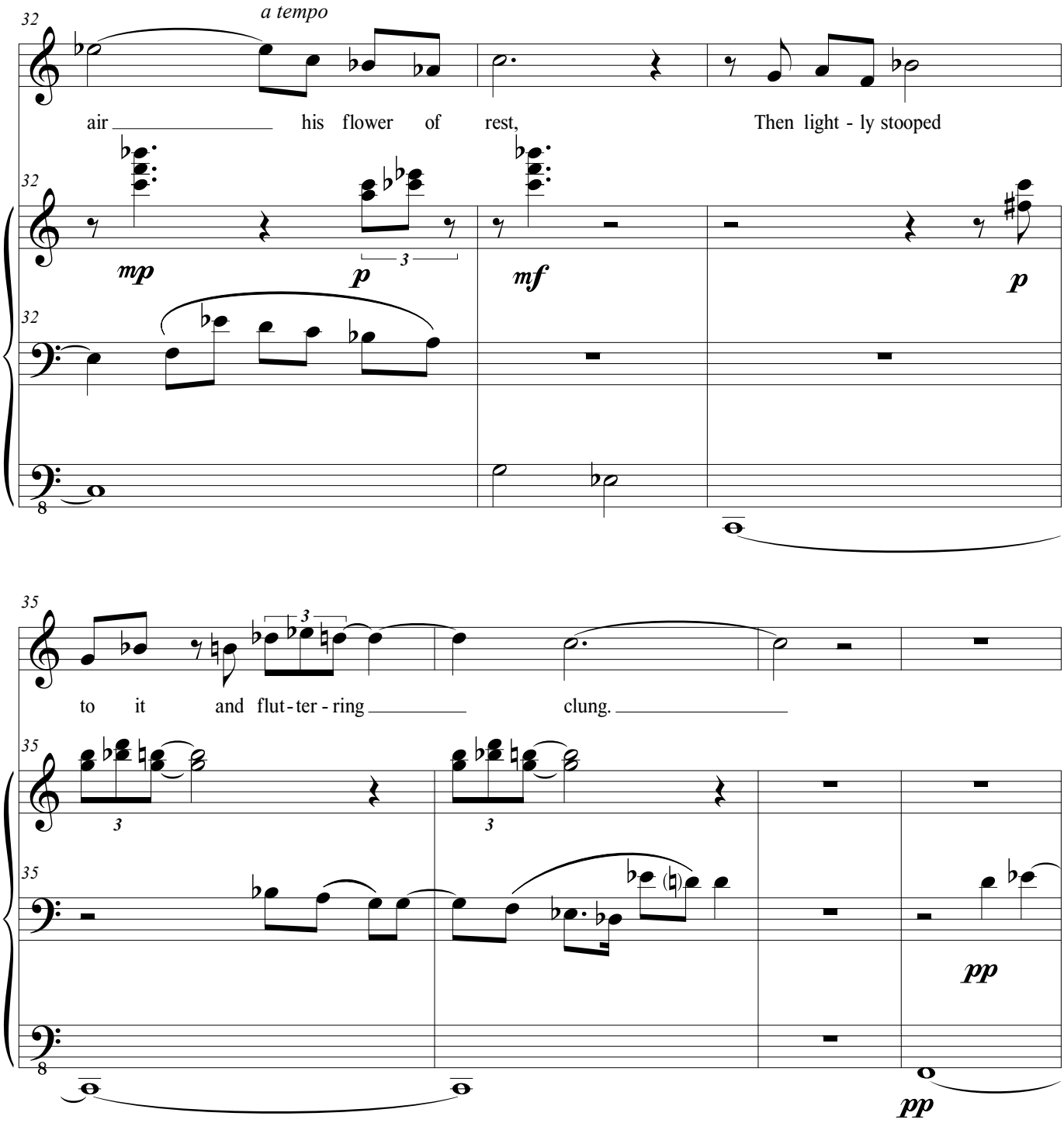
Range Finding

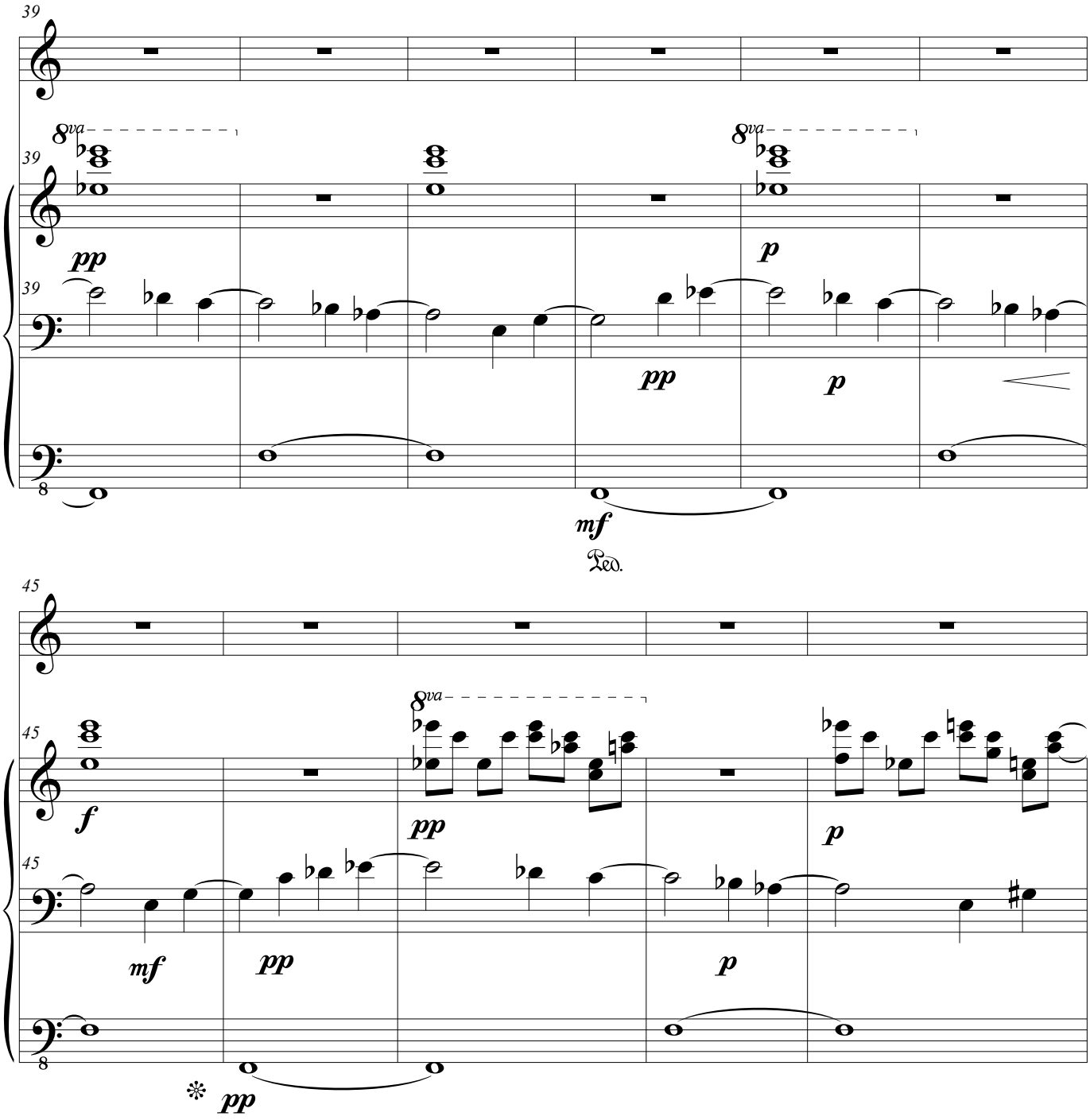


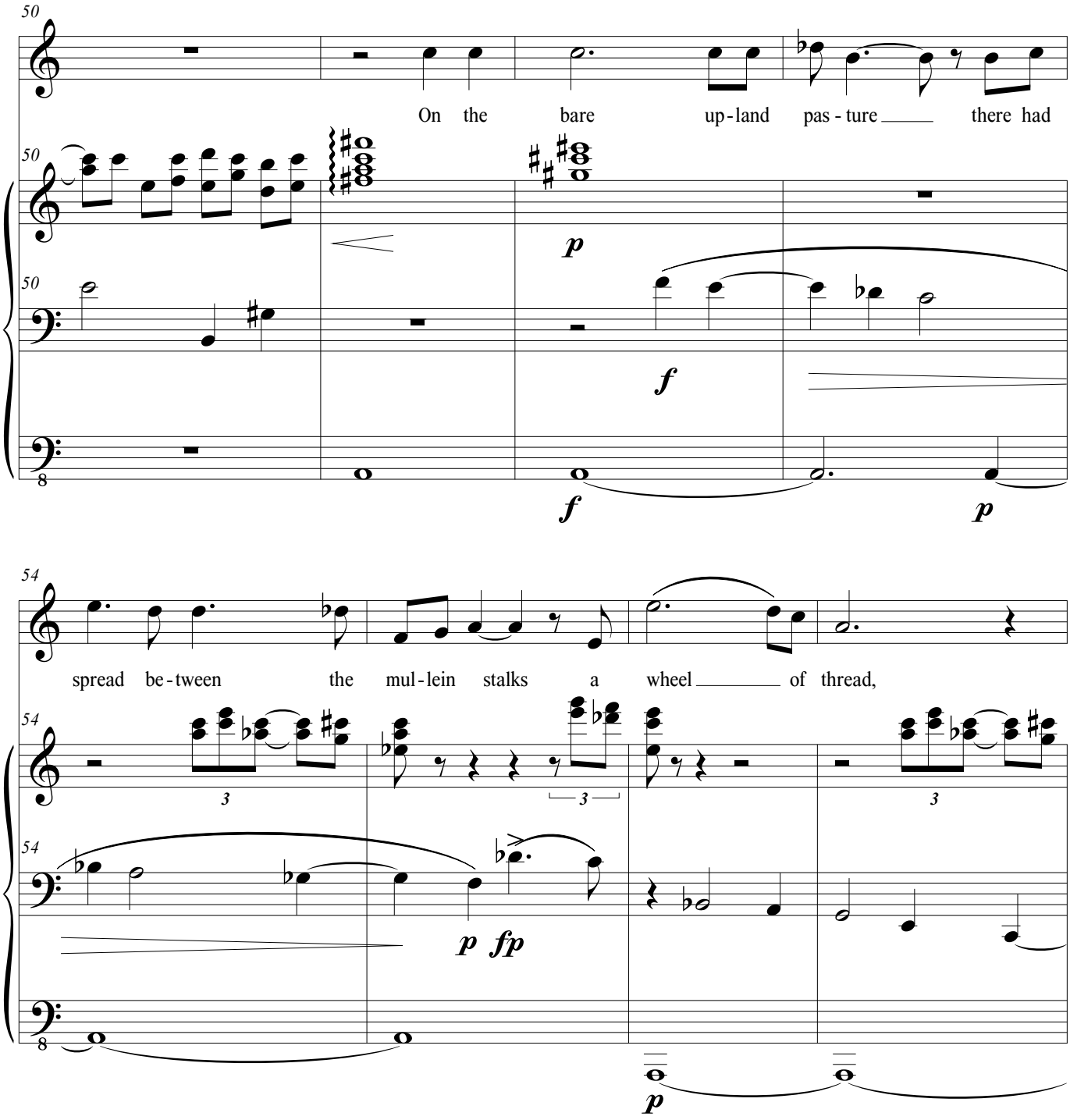

10
rent a cob - web dia - mond strung and cut a flower be - side a ground bird's
p
f
r.h.
l.h.
p
14
nest be - fore it stained a sin - gle hu - man
p
f
p
mf

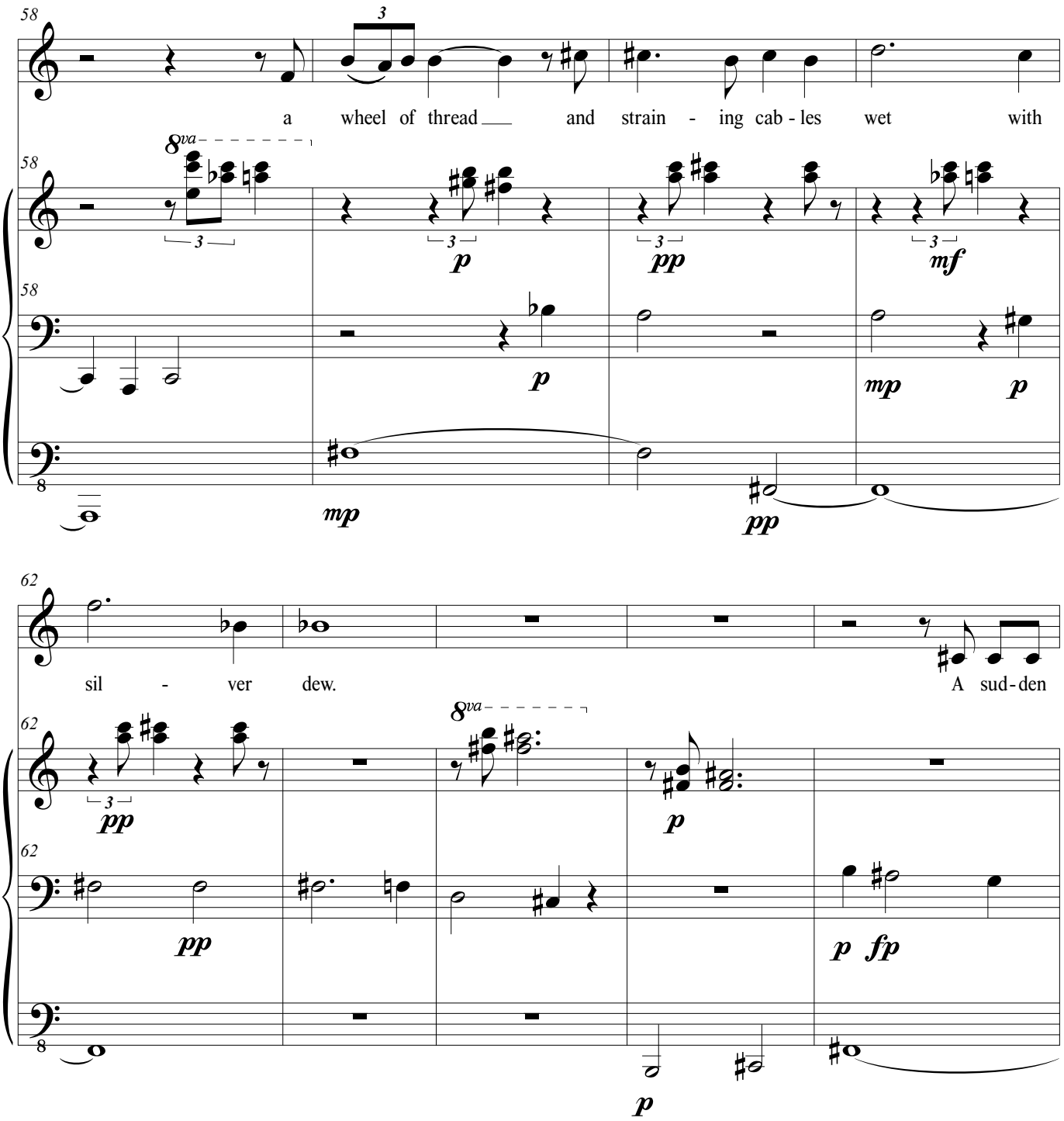

17
breast.
The strick - en flower bent doub - le,
p
mp
mf
f
21
and so hung.
pp

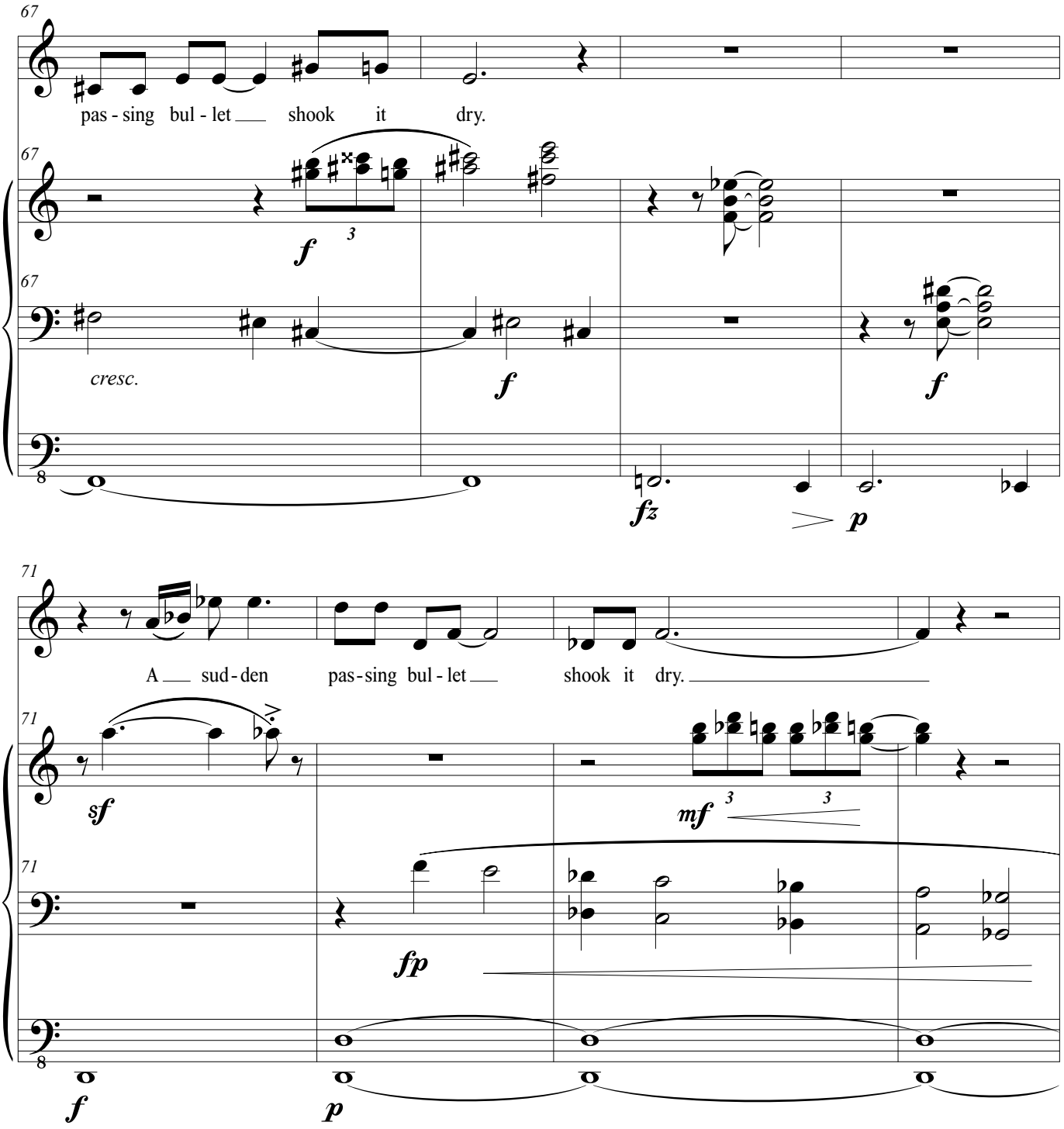

25
And still the bird re - vi - si - ted her young.
A but - ter - fly its
3
mp
r.h.
l.h.
p
29
rit.
fall had dis - pos - sessed
A mo - ment sought in
p
mp
l.h.
mf

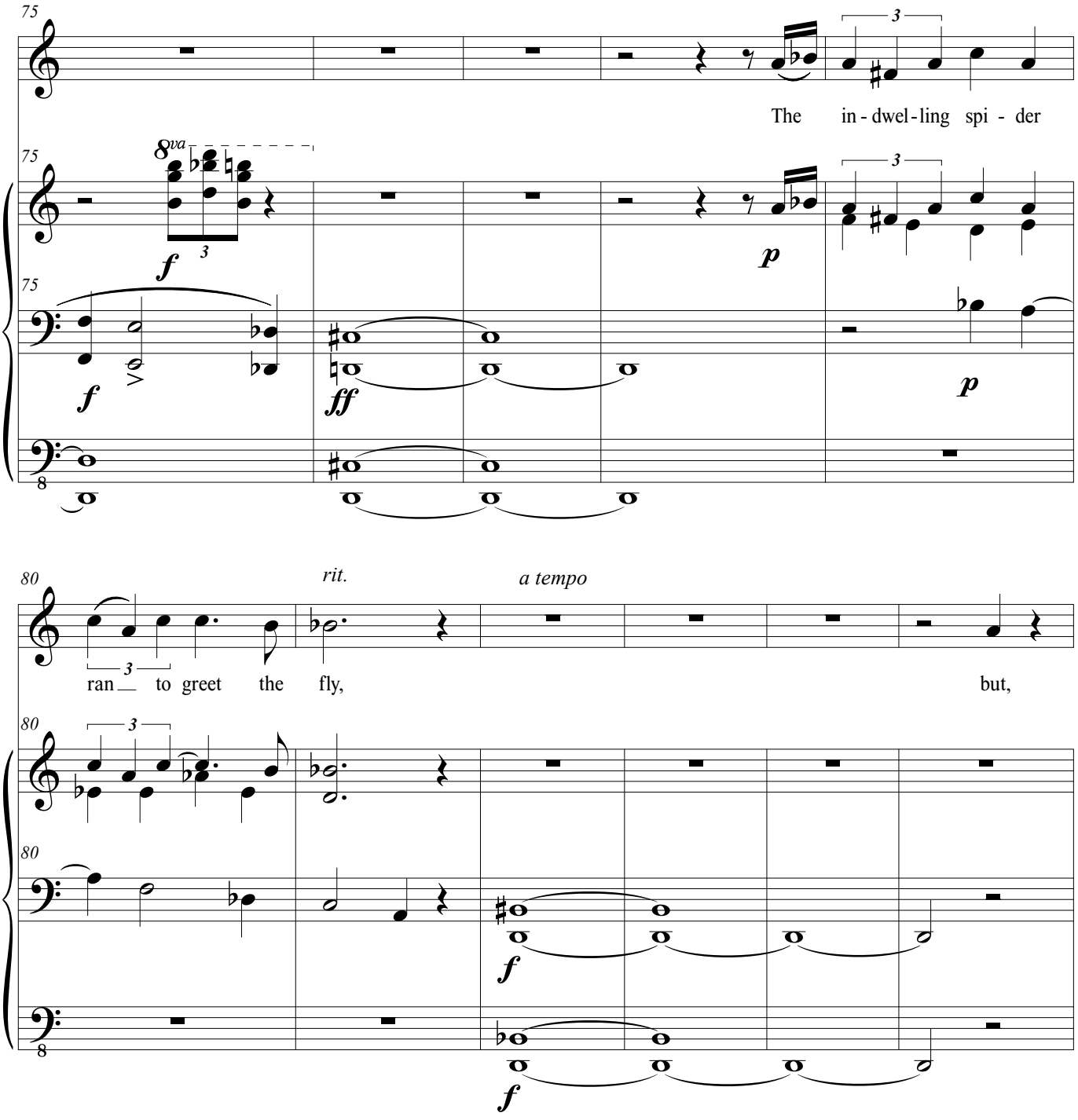

32
a tempo
air his flower of rest, Then light - ly stooped
mp
p
mf
p
35
to it and flut - ter - ring clung.
pp
pp

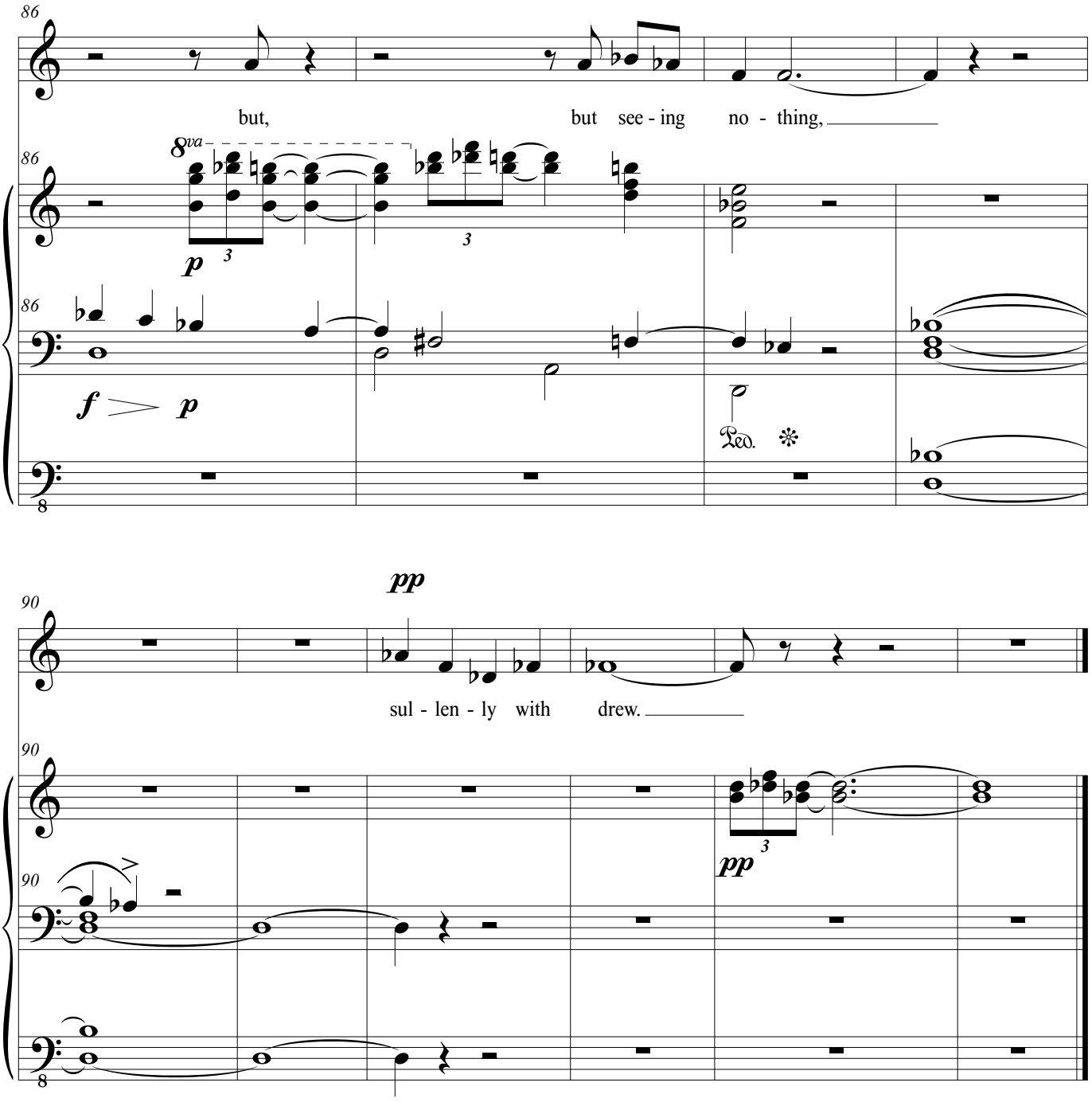

39
8va
pp
p
mf
Ped.
45
f
mf
pp
p


50
On the bare up-land pas-ture there had
p
f
f
p
54
spread be-tween the mul-lein stalks a wheel of thread,
3
3
3
p fp
p


58
a wheel of thread and strain - ing cab - les wet with
8va
p
pp
mf
mp
p
mp
pp
62
sil - ver dew.
A sud - den
8va
pp
p
pp
p fp
p


67
pas - sing bul - let shook it dry.
67
f
3
67
cresc.
f
f
fz
p
71
A sud - den pas - sing bul - let shook it dry.
71
sf
mf
3
3
71
fp
f
p


75
The in - dwel - ling spi - der
8va
f
p
ff
80
rit.
a tempo
ran to greet the fly, but,


86
but, but see - ing no - thing,
8va
p
f p
Ped.
90
pp
sul - len - ly with drew.
pp

Saint

High Voice

At the window concealing
the old flaking sandalwood
of her viol once sparkling
with flute and with lute
is the pale saint displaying
the old book of the Magnificat
that unfolds itself as streaming
once with vespers and compline

at this monstrance of glass
that brushes a harp formed by the angel
with the flight of the evening
for the delicate joint of the finger
that, without the old sandalwood,
nor with the old book, she balances
on the instrumental plumage,
she, musician of silence.

--Stephane Mallarme

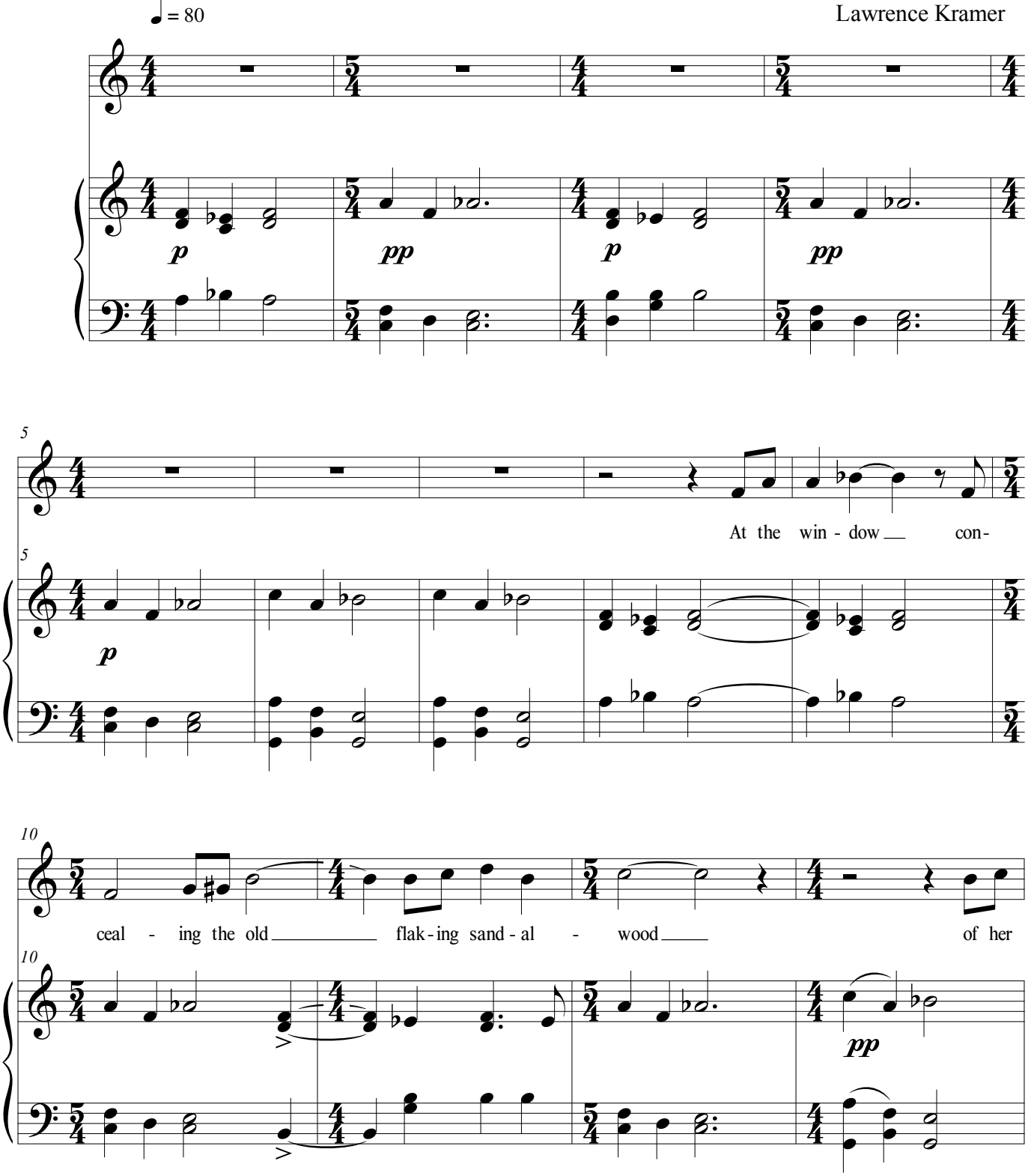
(Translation by the composer.)

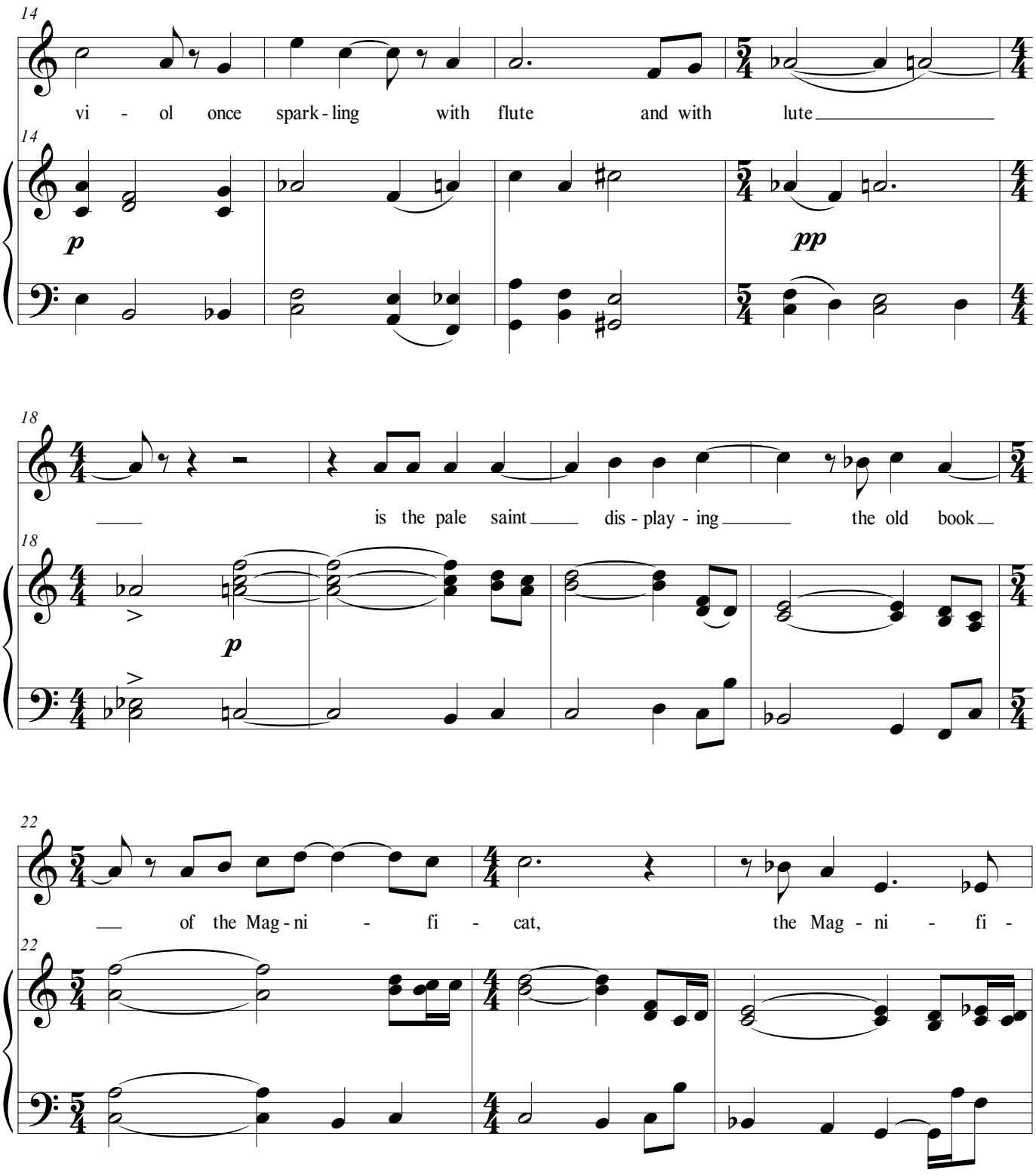
Duration 4:45
Written Voice Range: D4 - G♯5
Tessitura: F4 - E5

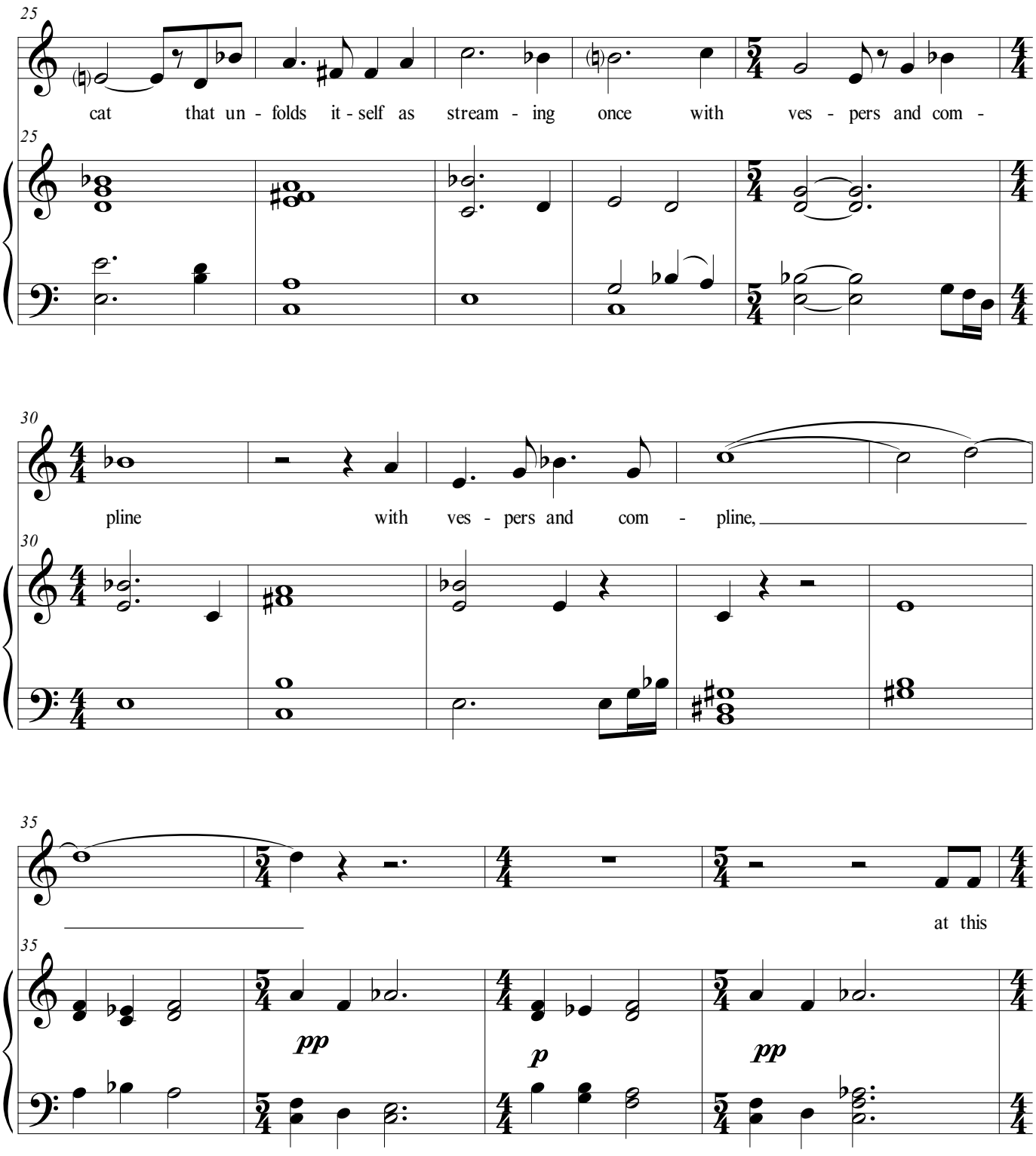
Composed 2021

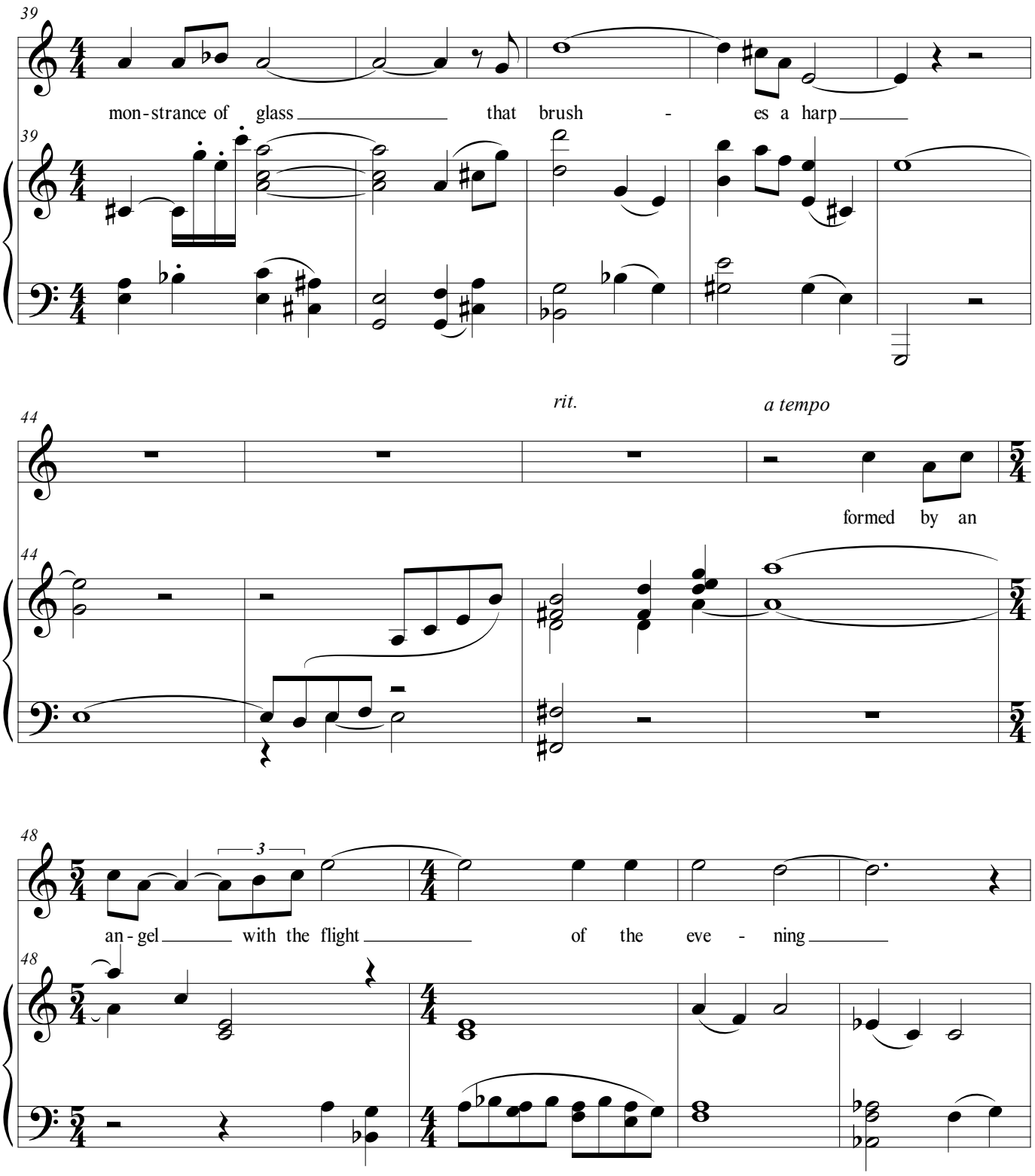
Saint

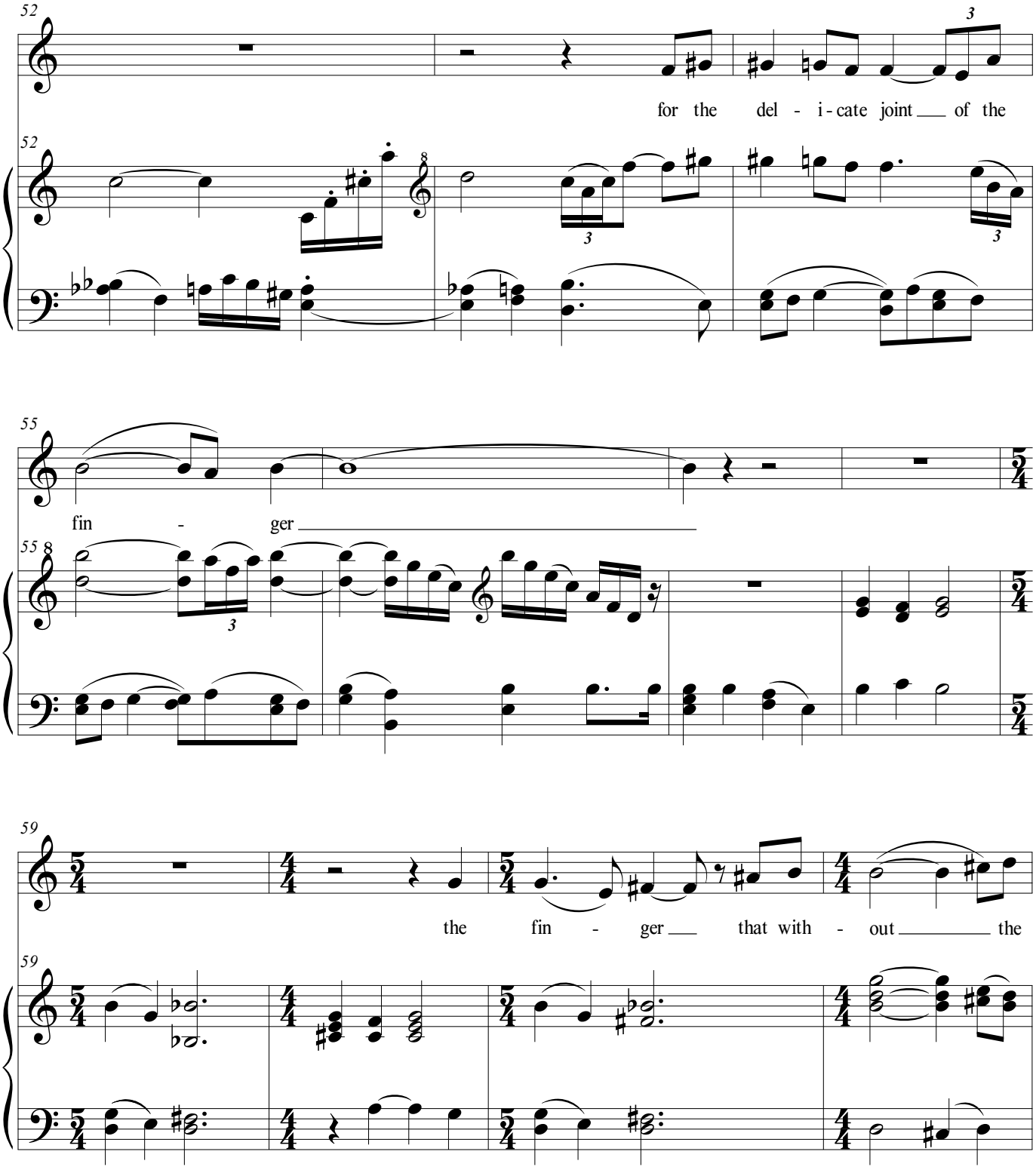
Lawrence Kramer

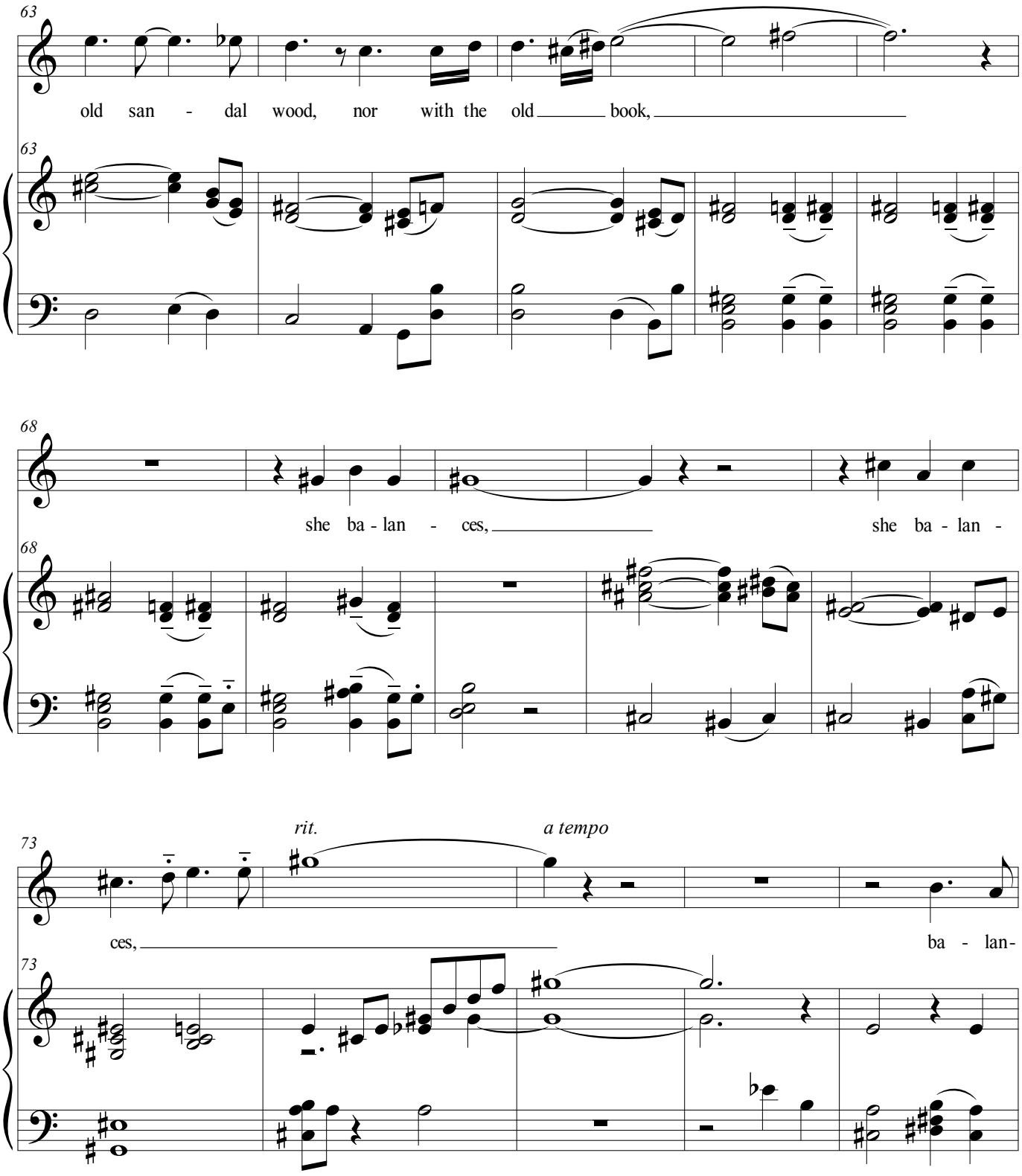


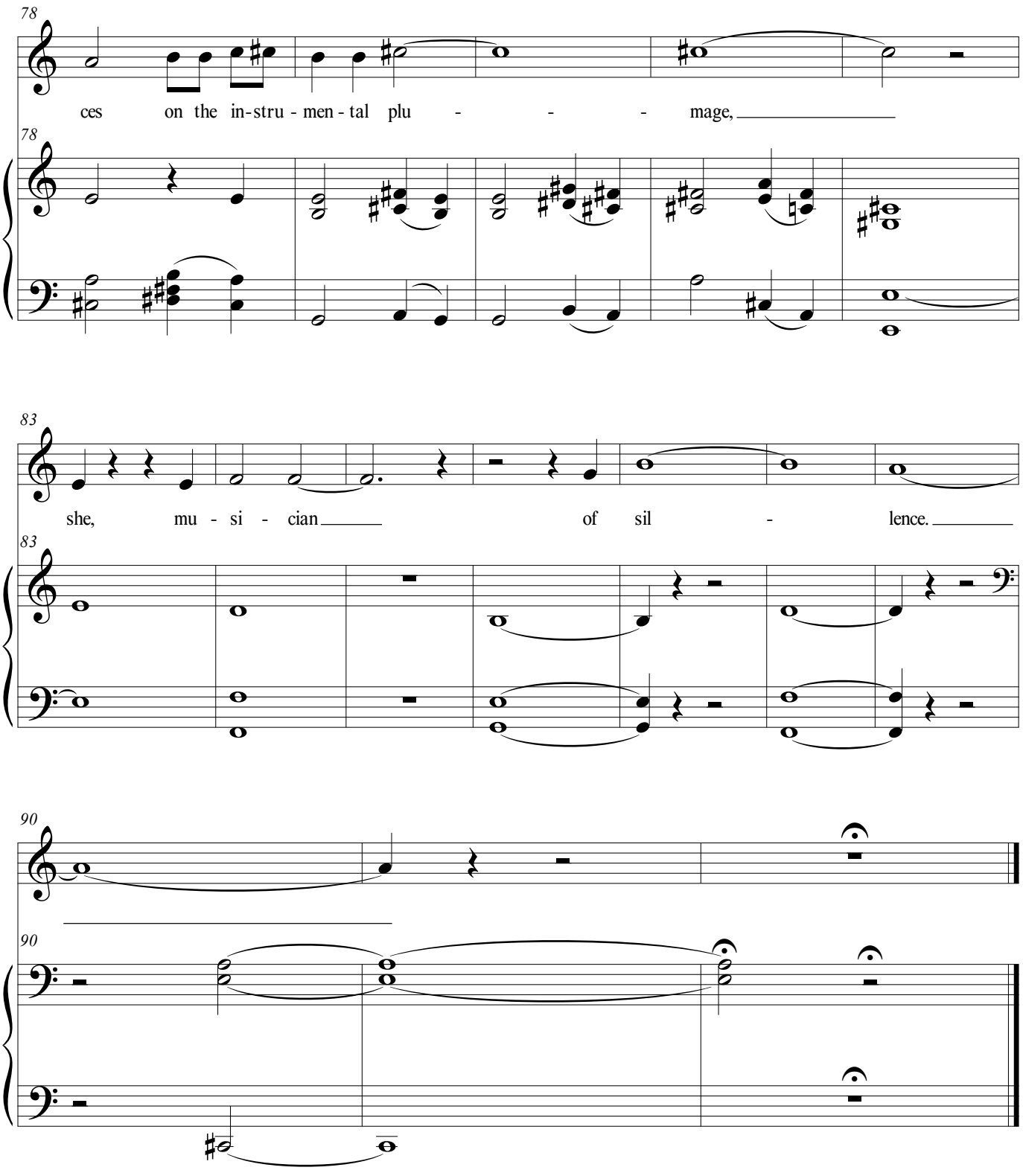

14
vi - ol once spark - ling with flute and with lute
p
pp
18
is the pale saint dis - play - ing the old book
p
22
of the Mag - ni - fi - cat, the Mag - ni - fi -


25
cat that un - folds it - self as stream - ing once with ves - pers and com -
30
pline with ves - pers and com - pline,
35
at this
pp
p
pp


39
mon-strance of glass that brush - es a harp
39
rit.
a tempo
44
formed by an
44
48
3
an-gel with the flight of the eve - ning
48


52
for the del - i - cate joint of the
52
55
fin - ger
55
59
the fin - ger that with - out the
59


63
old san - dal wood, nor with the old book,
63
68
she ba - lan - ces, she ba - lan -
68
73
rit.
a tempo
ces, ba - lan-
73


78
ces on the in-stru - men - tal plu - - - mage,
78
83
she, mu - si - cian of sil - lence.
83
90
90

She Sweeps with Many-Colored Brooms

Soprano

She sweeps with many-colored brooms,
And leaves the shreds behind;
Oh, housewife in the evening west,
Come back, and dust the pond!

You dropped a purple raveling in,
You dropped an amber thread;
And now you've littered all the East
With duds of emerald!

And still she plies her spotted brooms,
And still the aprons fly,
Till brooms fade softly into stars --
And then I come away.

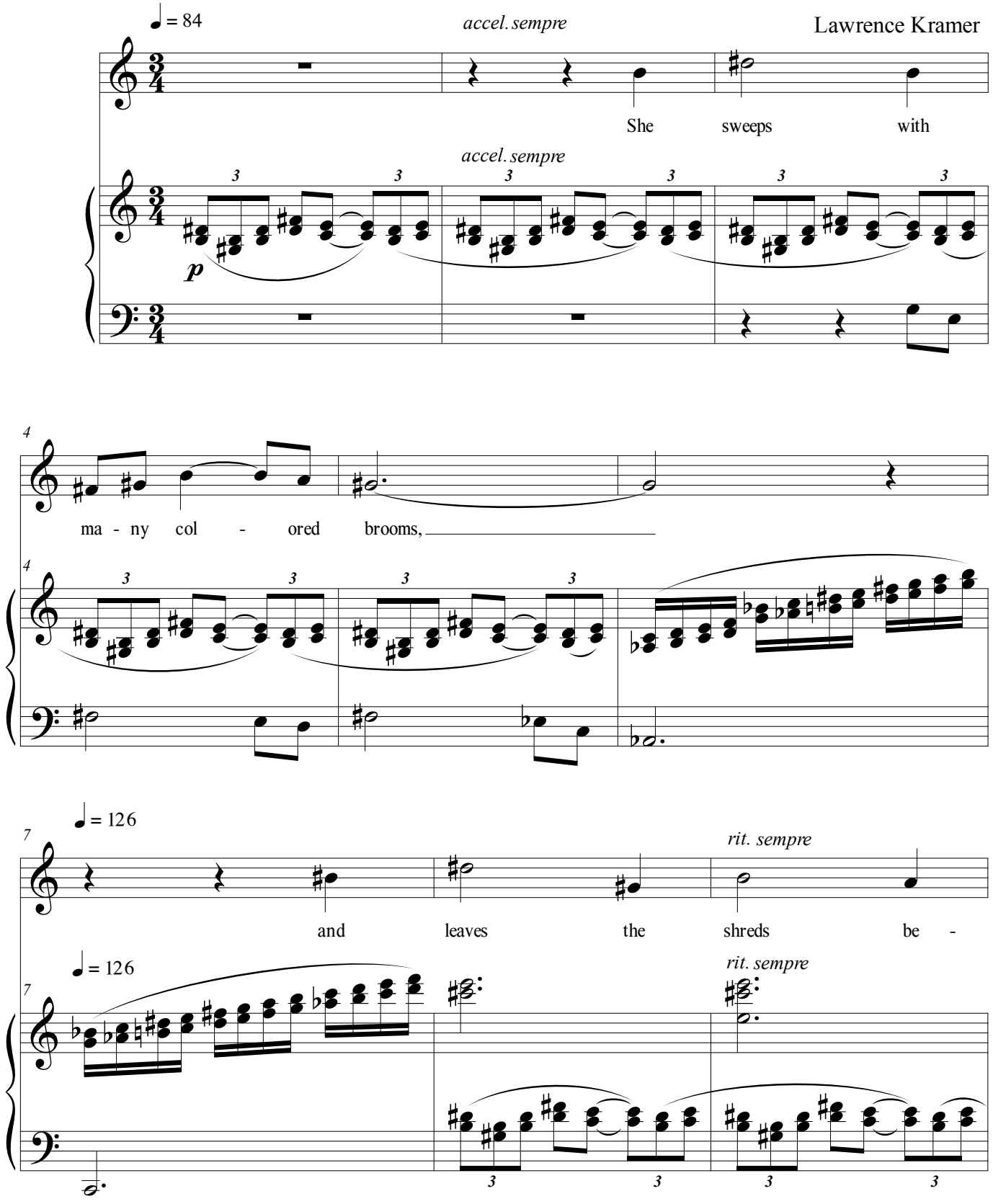
--Emily Dickinson

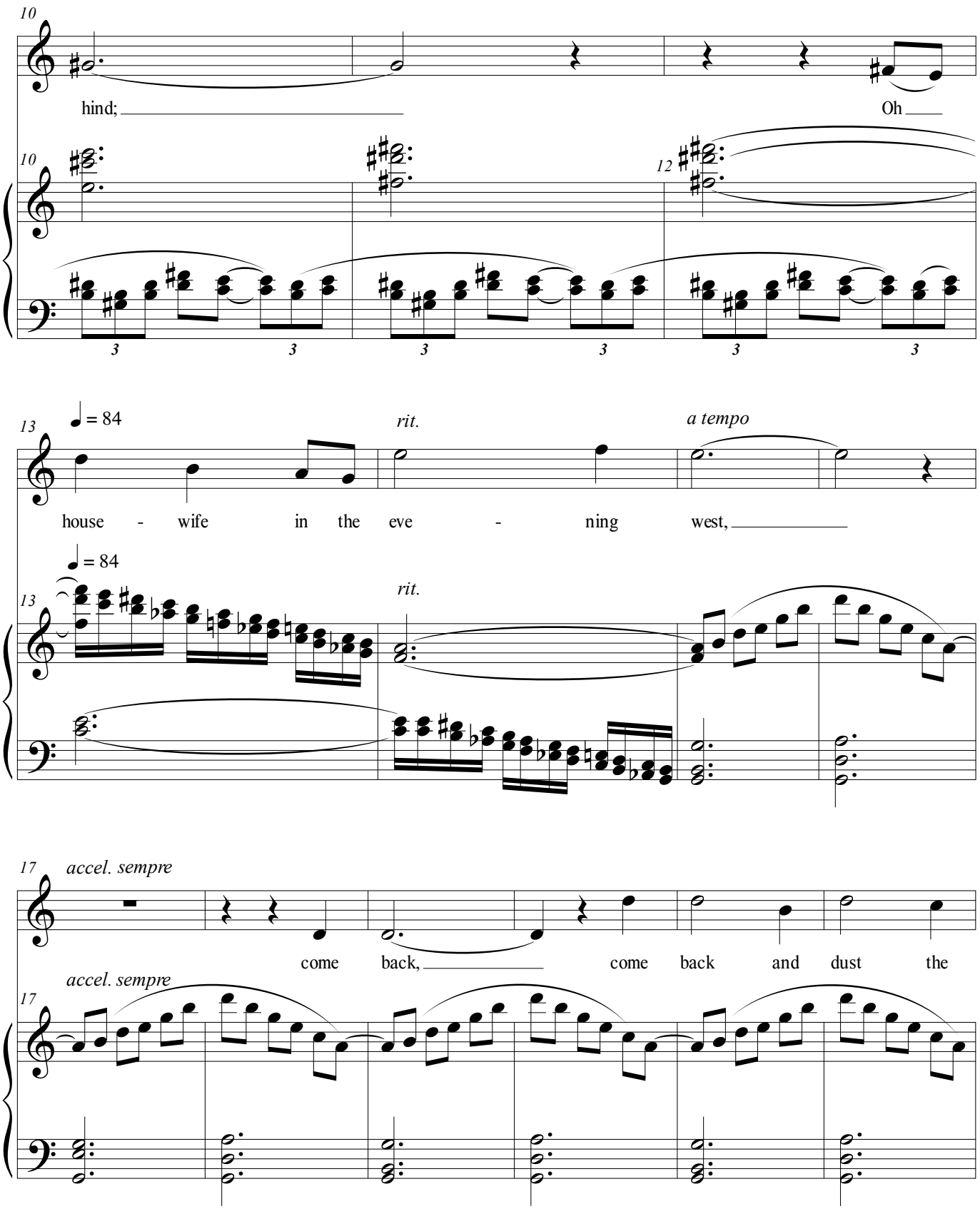
Voice Range: D4- A5
Tessitura: G♯4 - E5
Duration: 3:30

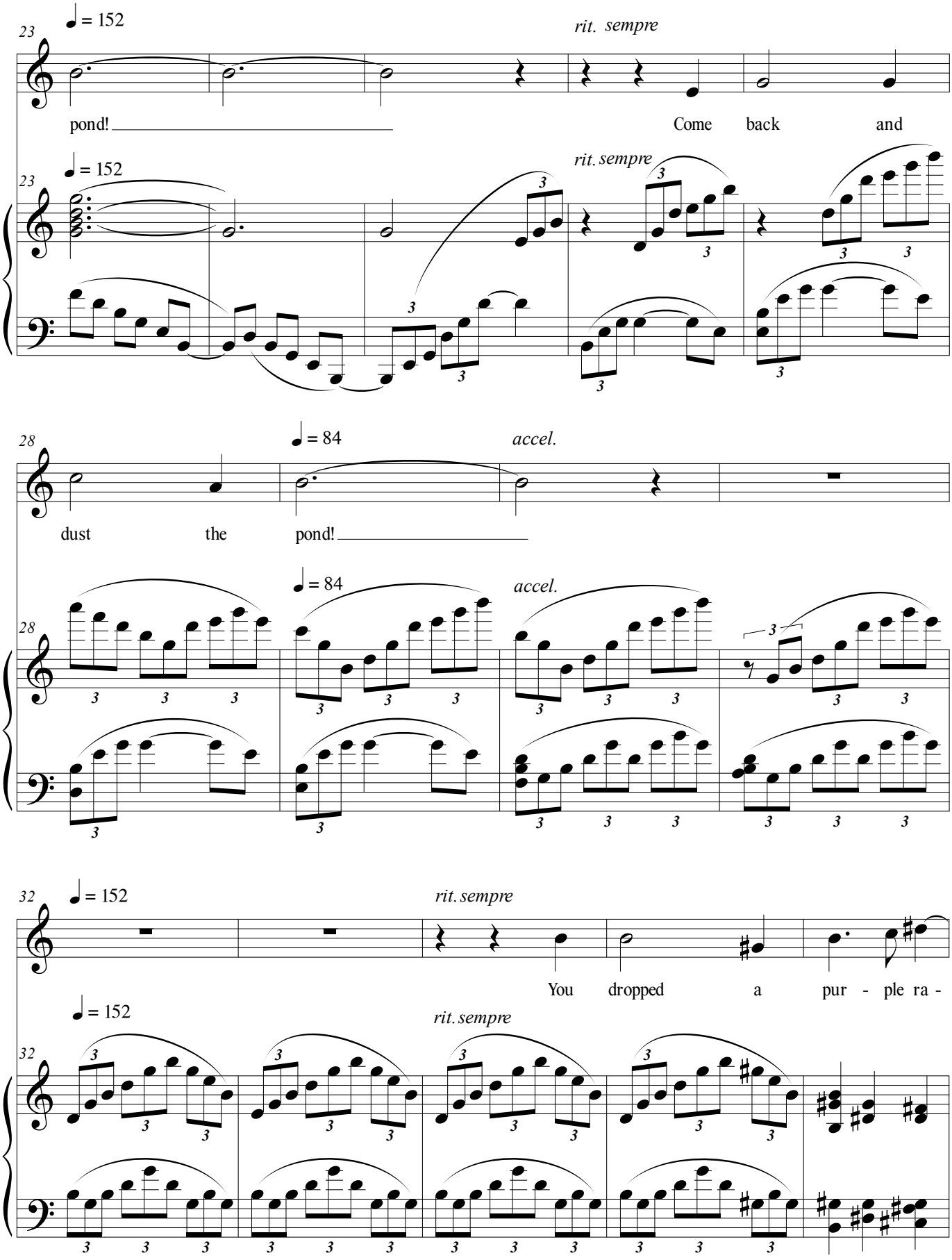
Composed 2017

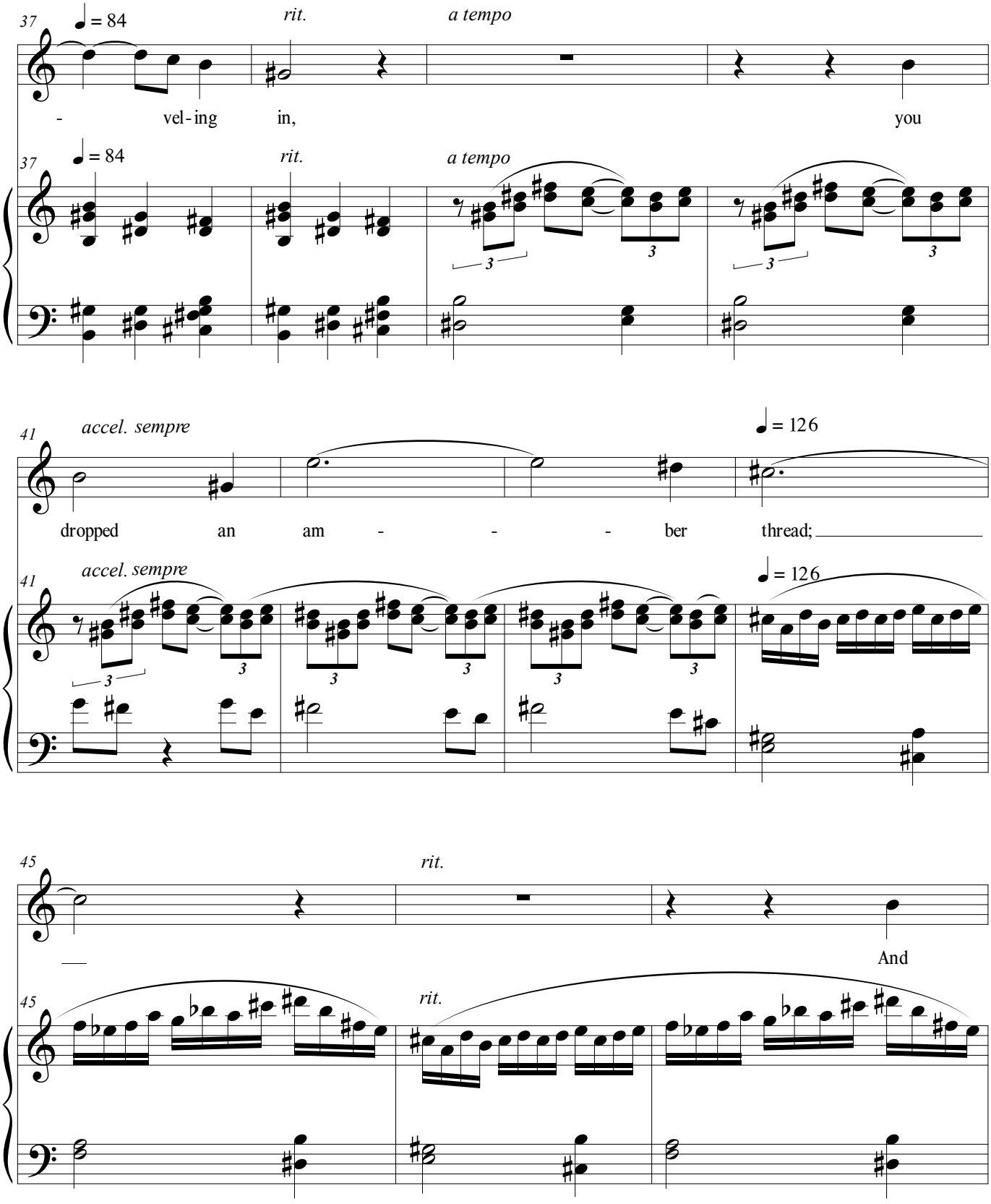
She Sweeps with Many-Colored Brooms

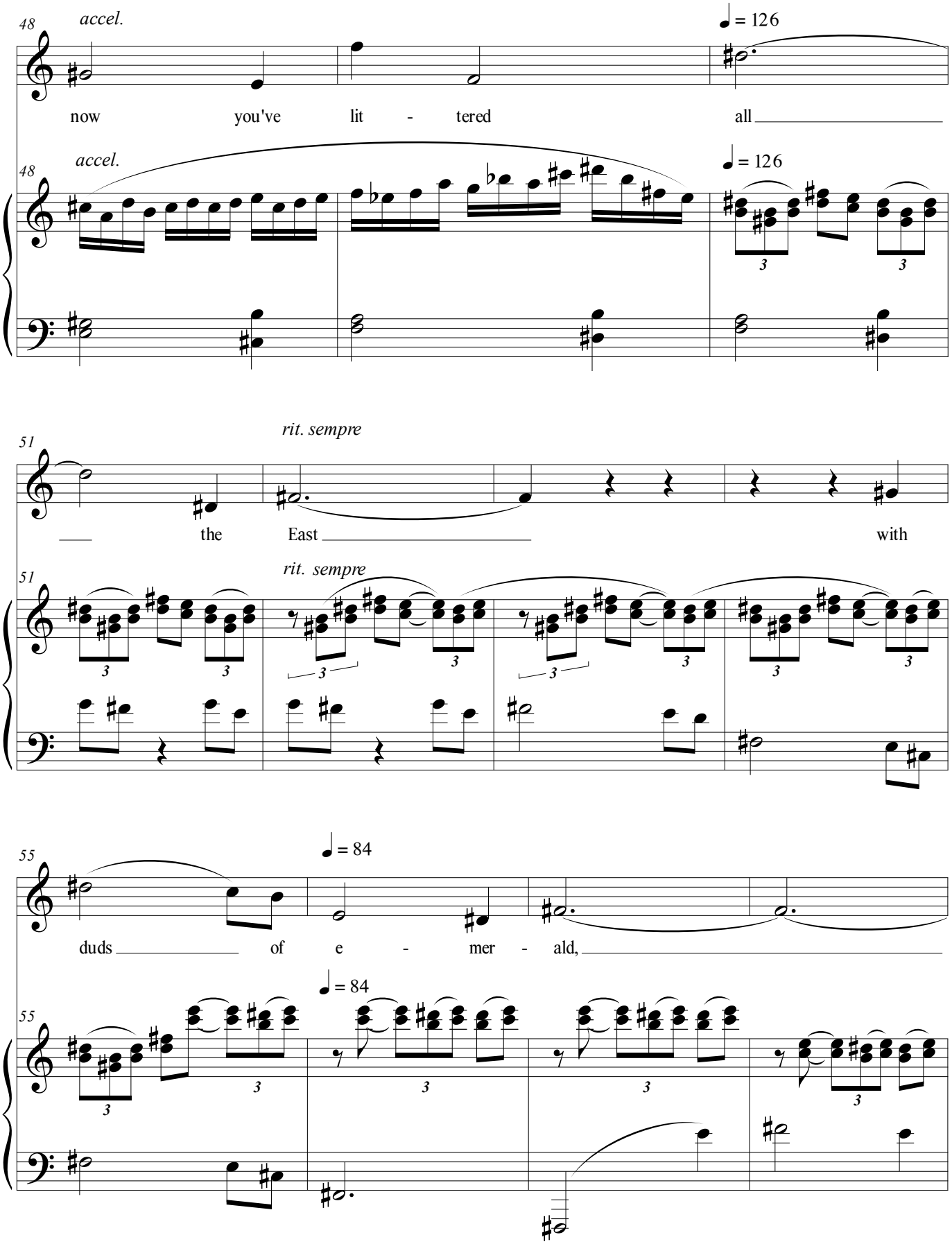
Lawrence Kramer

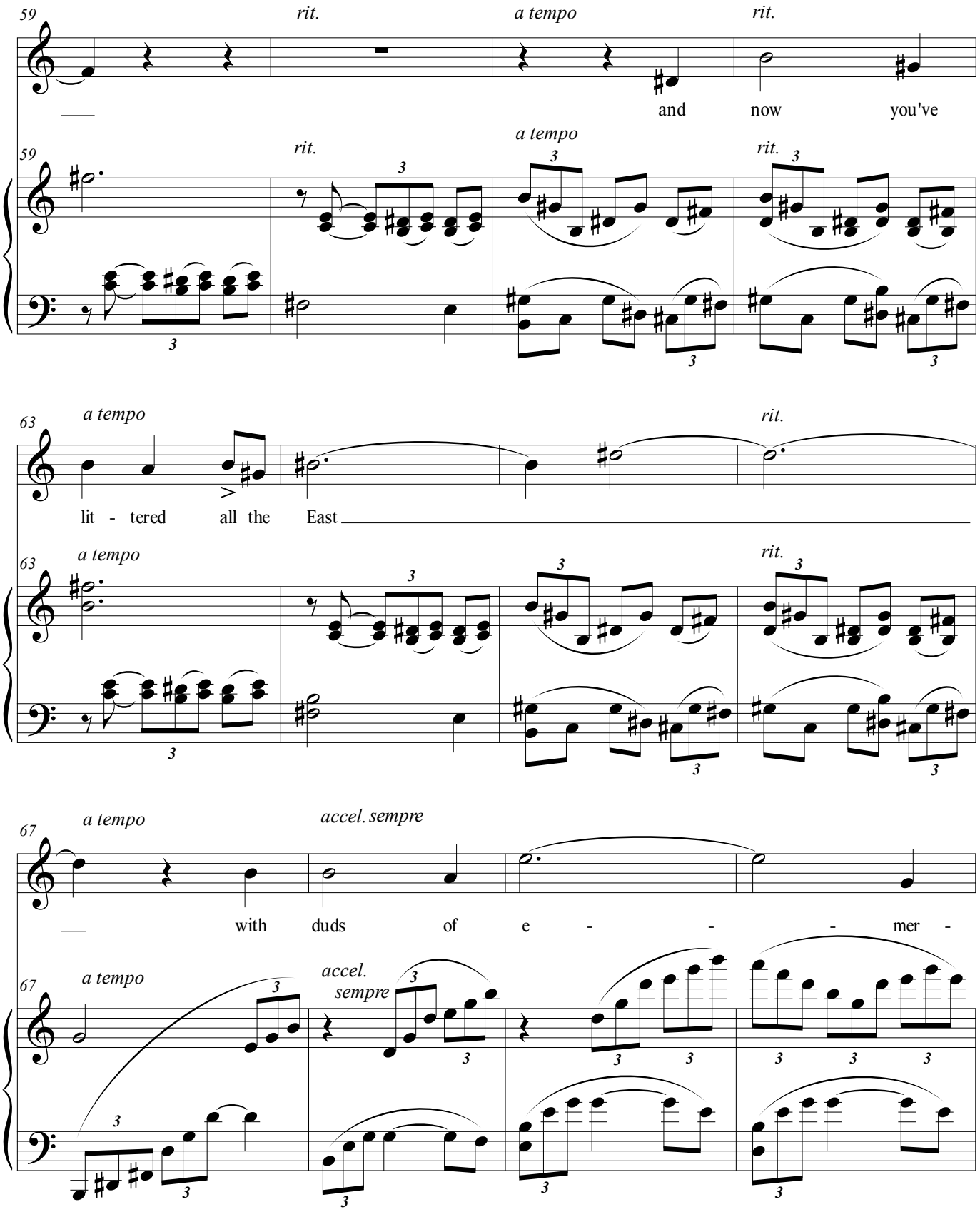


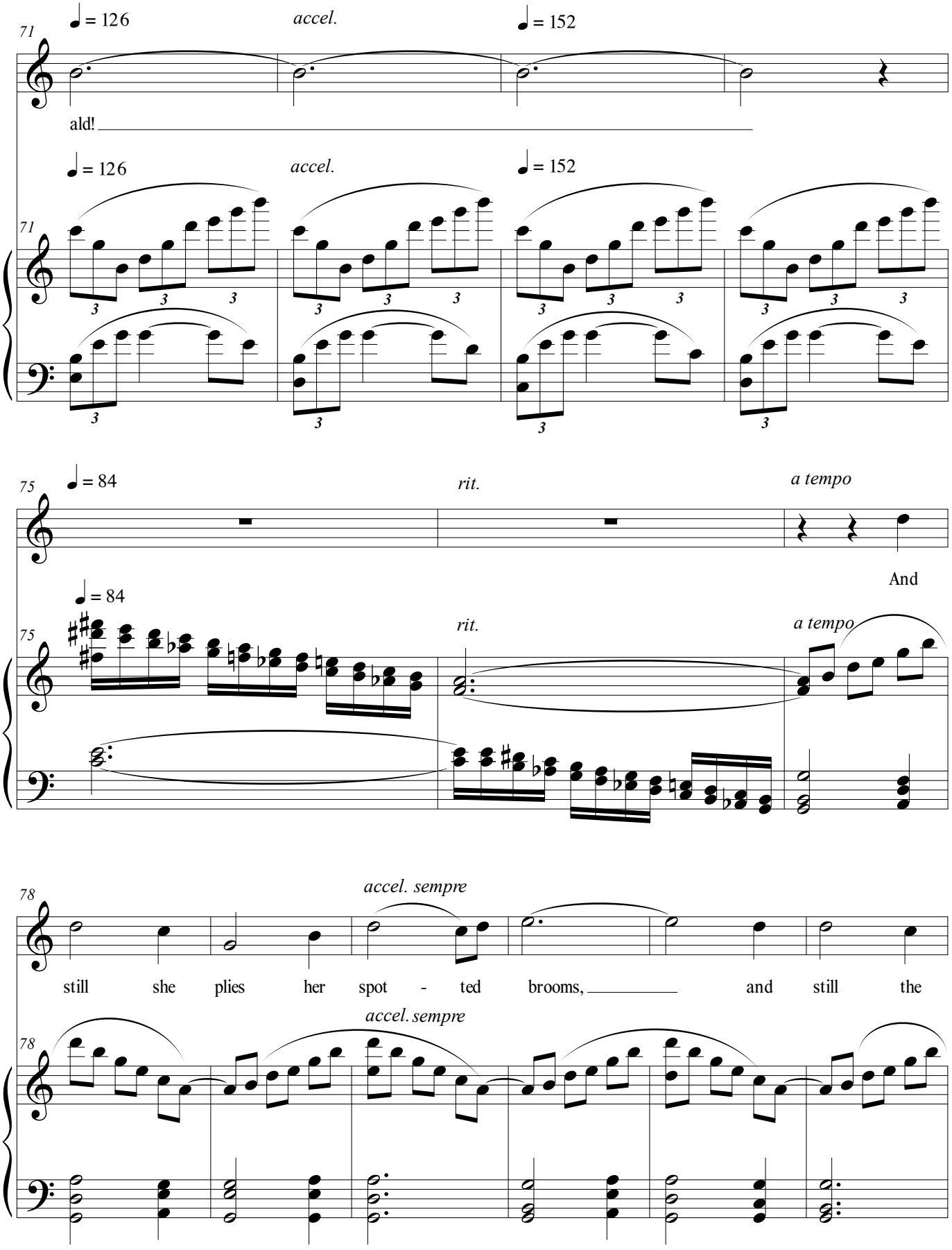

10
hind;
Oh
10
12
13
♩ = 84
rit.
a tempo
house - wife in the eve - ning west,
13
♩ = 84
rit.
17
accel. sempre
come back, come back and dust the
accel. sempre
17

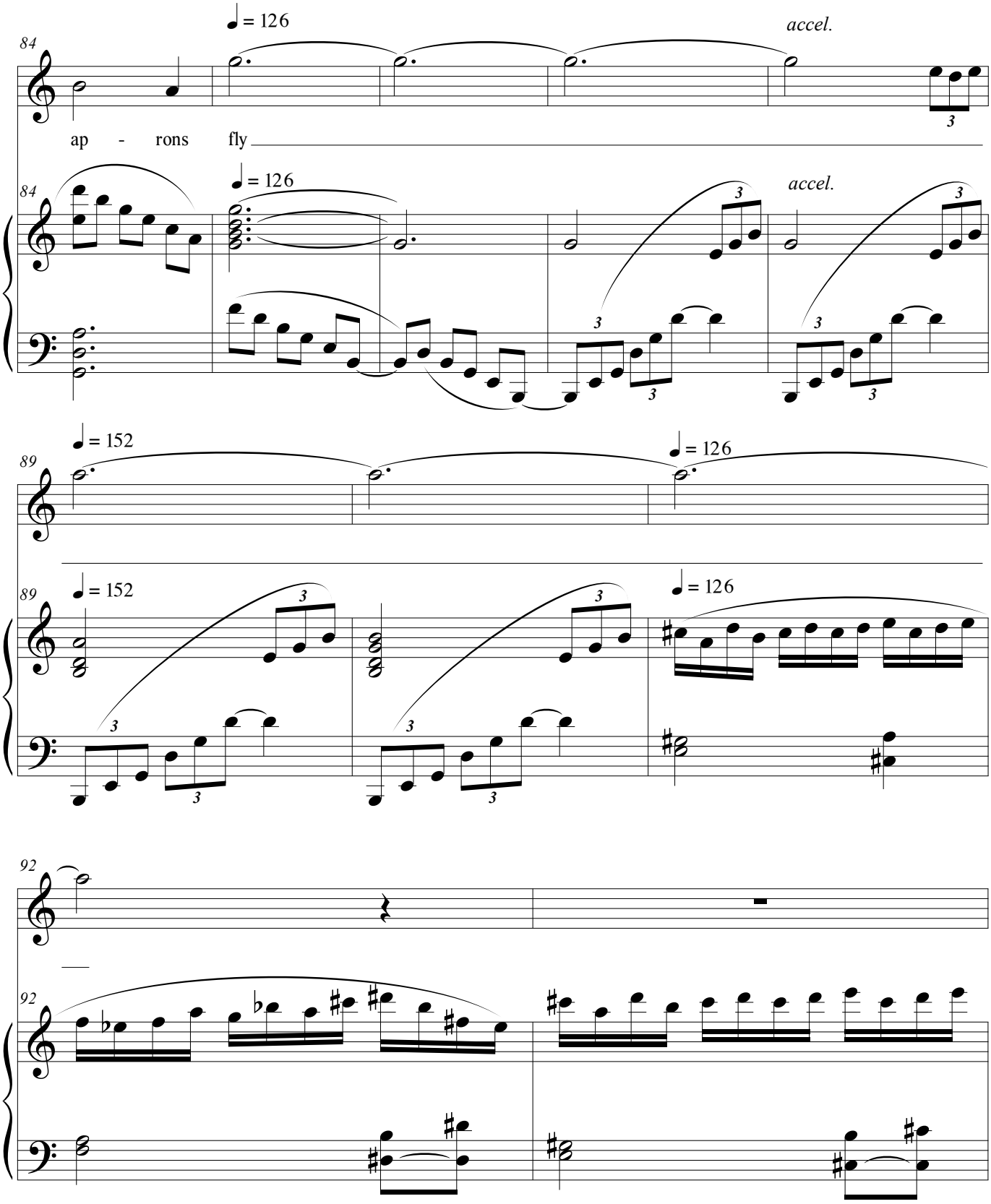

23
♩ = 152
rit. sempre
pond!
Come back and
23
♩ = 152
rit. sempre
28
♩ = 84
accel.
dust the pond!
28
♩ = 84
accel.
32
♩ = 152
rit. sempre
You dropped a pur - ple ra -
32
♩ = 152
rit. sempre

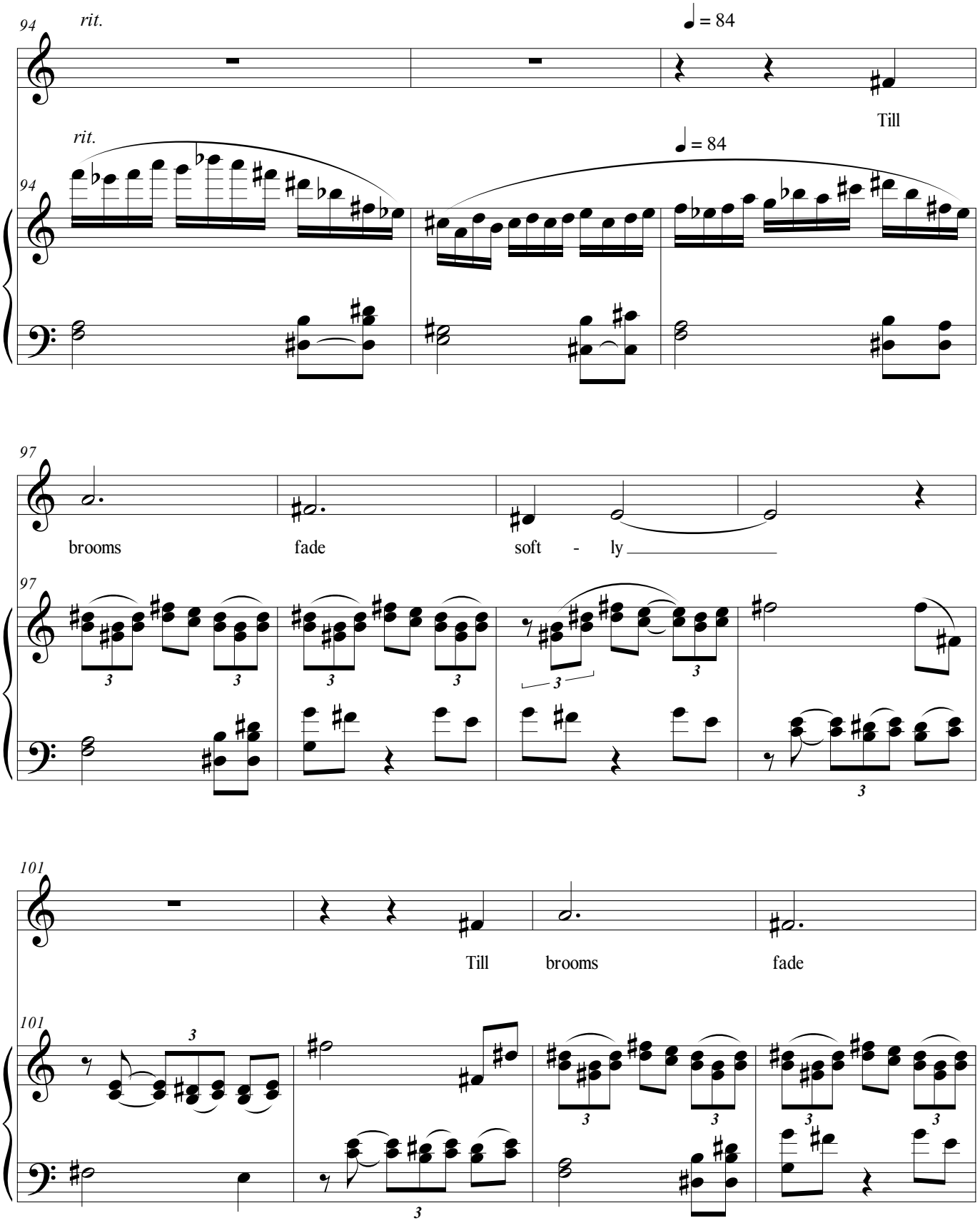

37
♩ = 84
rit.
a tempo
- vel - ing in, you
37
♩ = 84
rit.
a tempo
41
accel. sempre
♩ = 126
dropped an am - - - ber thread;
41
accel. sempre
♩ = 126
45
rit.
And
45
rit.

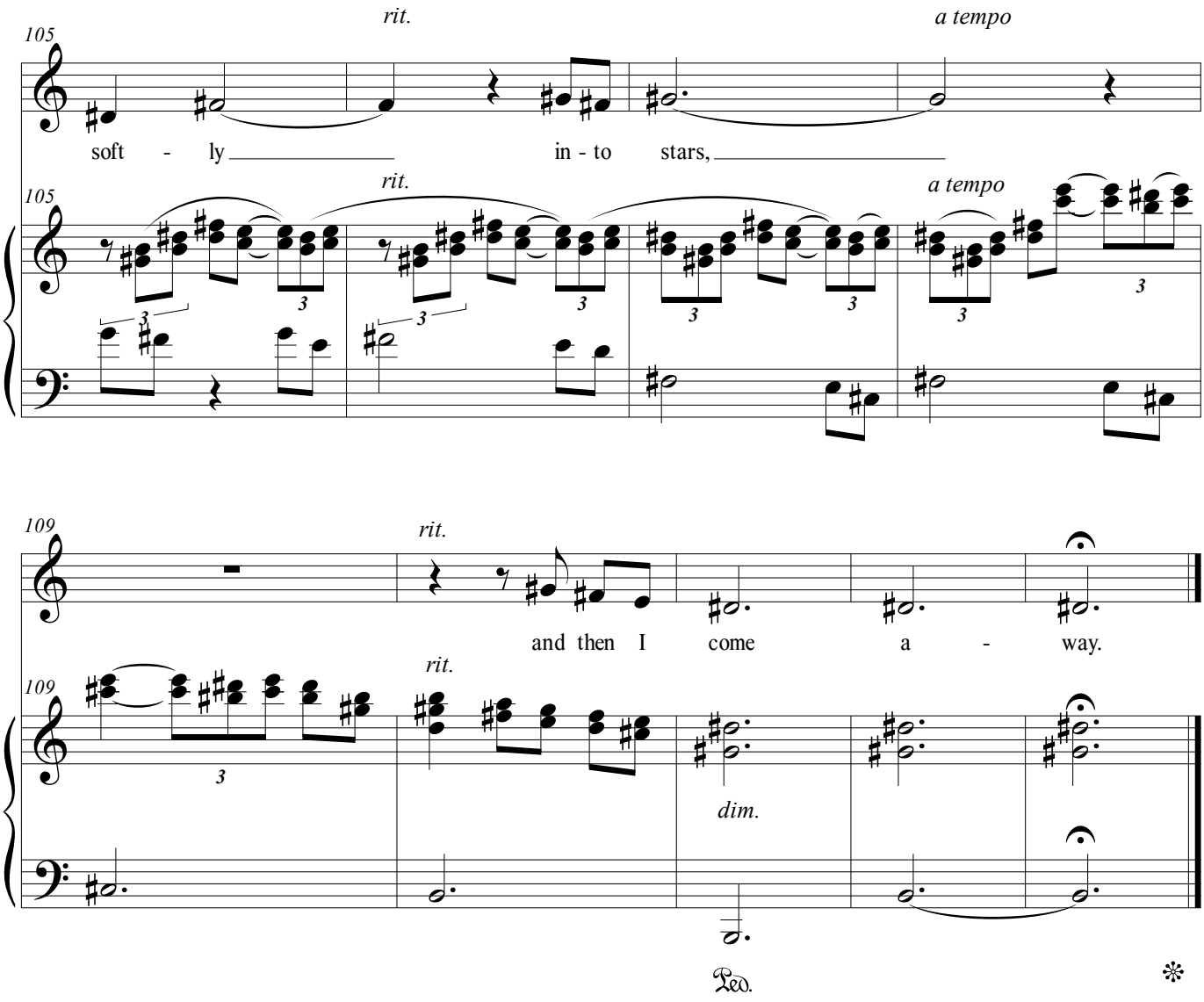

48
accel.
♩ = 126
now you've lit - tered all
48
accel.
♩ = 126
51
rit. sempre
the East with
51
rit. sempre
55
♩ = 84
duds of e - mer - ald,
55
♩ = 84


59
rit.
a tempo
rit.
and now you've
59
rit.
a tempo
rit.
63
a tempo
rit.
lit - tered all the East
63
a tempo
rit.
67
a tempo
accel. sempre
with duds of e - - - mer -
67
a tempo
accel.
sempre


71
♩ = 126
accel.
♩ = 152
ald!
71
♩ = 126
accel.
♩ = 152
75
♩ = 84
rit.
a tempo
And
75
♩ = 84
rit.
a tempo
78
accel. sempre
still she plies her spot - ted brooms, and still the
78
accel. sempre


84
♩ = 126
accel.
ap - rons fly
84
♩ = 126
accel.
89
♩ = 152
♩ = 126
89
♩ = 152
♩ = 126
92
92


94
rit.
♩ = 84
Till
94
rit.
♩ = 84
97
brooms
fade
soft - ly
97
101
Till
brooms
fade
101


105
rit.
a tempo
soft - ly
in - to stars,
105
rit.
a tempo
3
109
rit.
and then I come a - way.
109
rit.
dim.
Ped.

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

High Voice

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

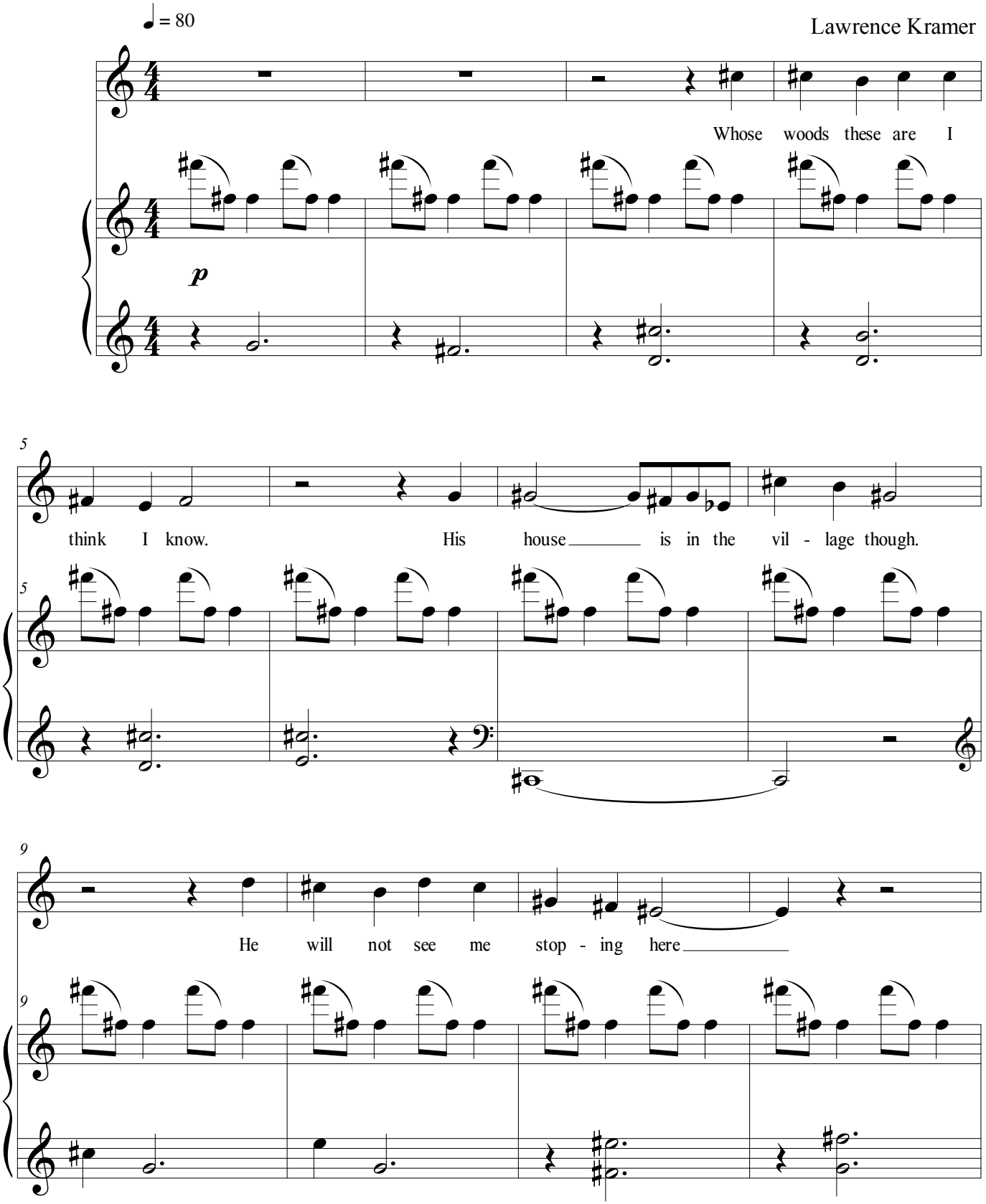
The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

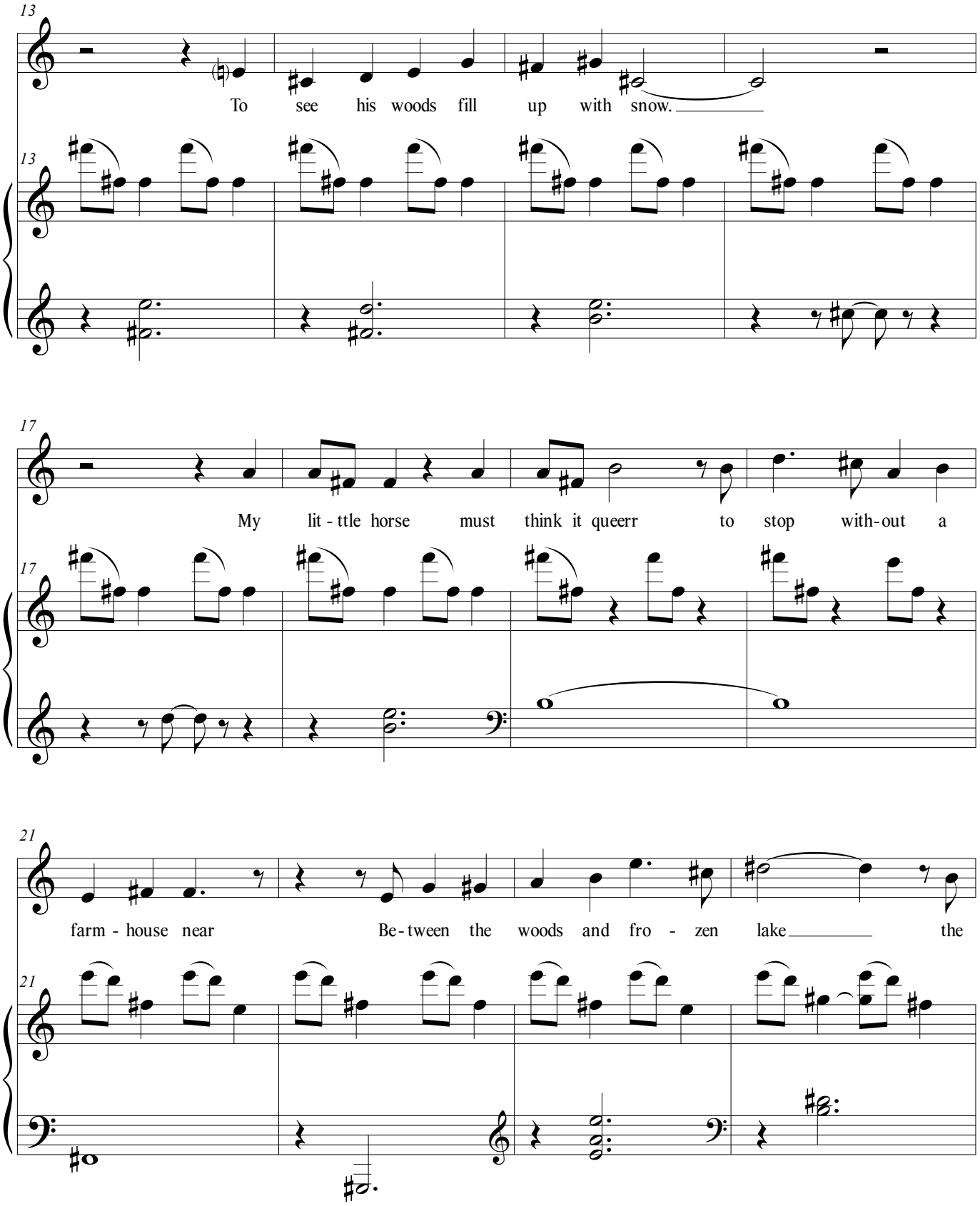
--Robert Frost

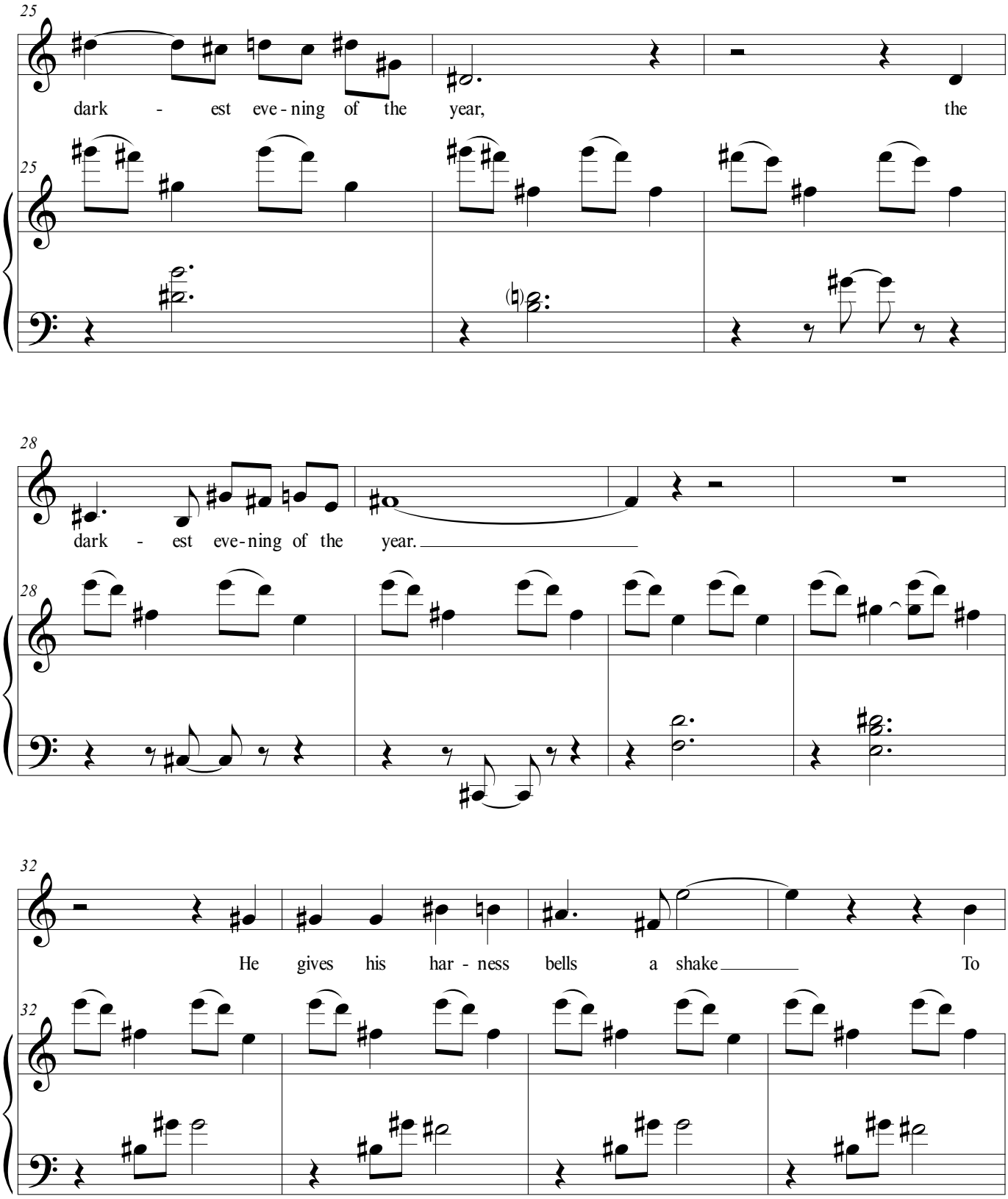
Written voice range: B3 - G#5
Tessitura: F#4 - D♯5
Duration 3:40

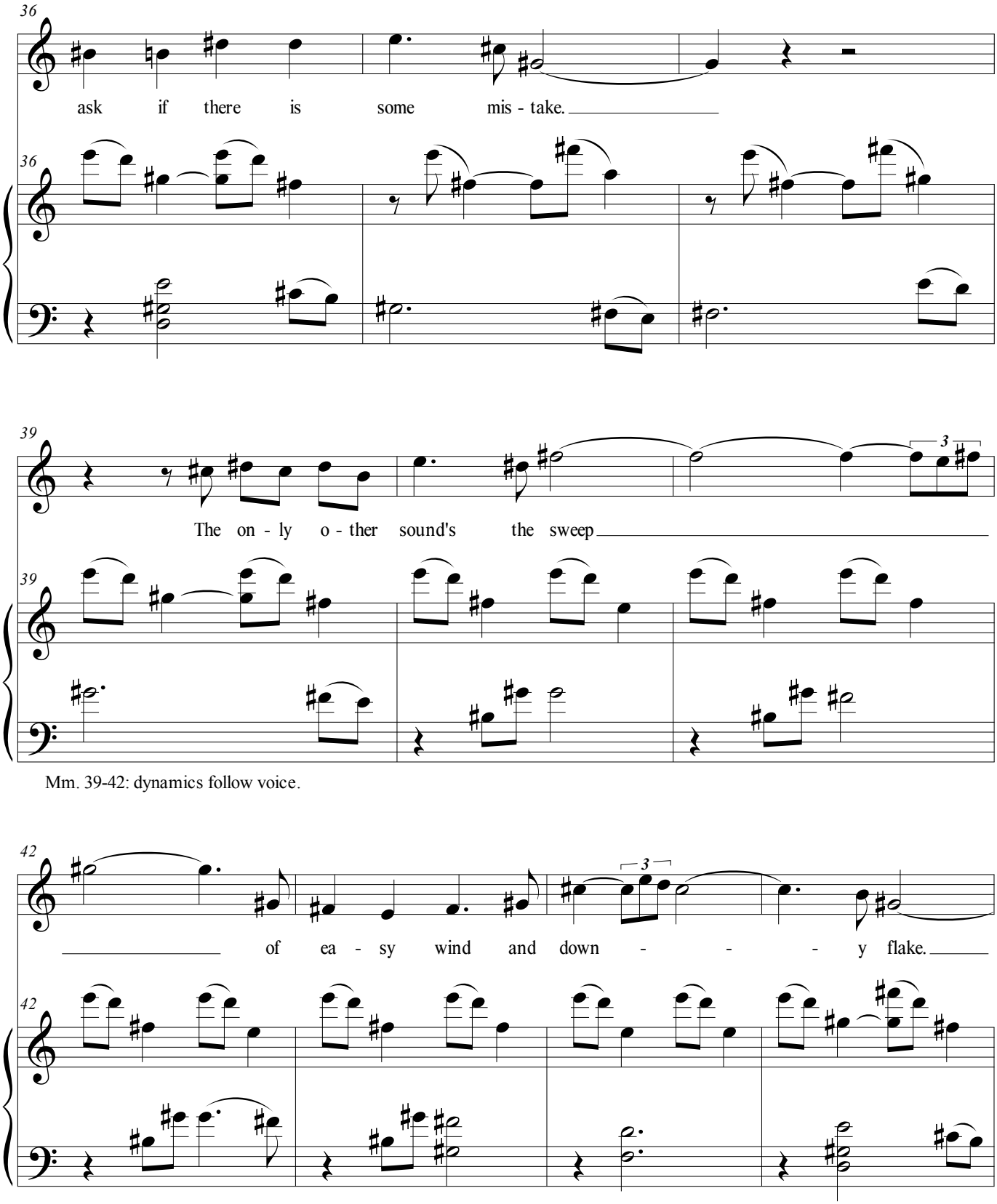
Composed January 1, 2019

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

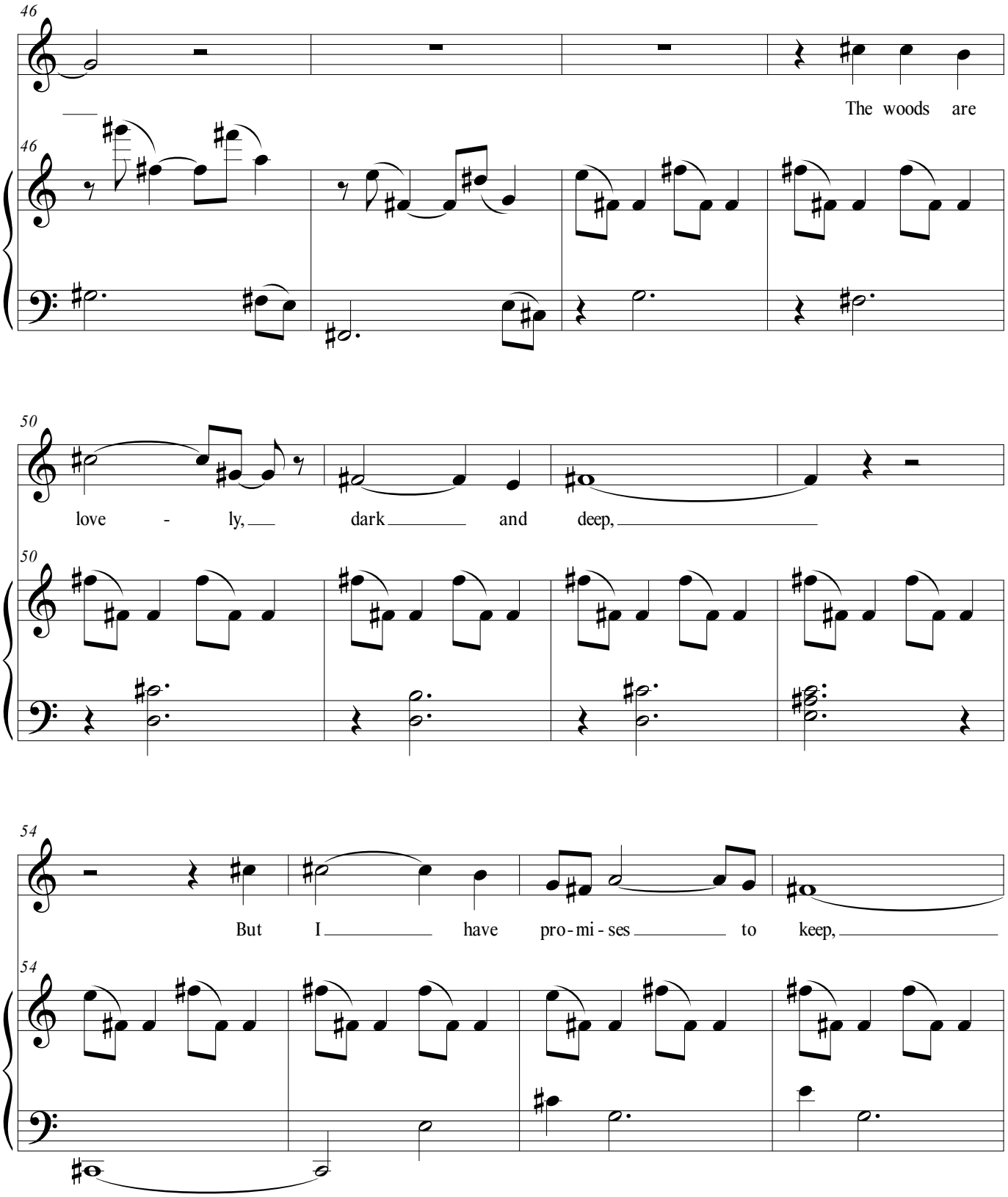


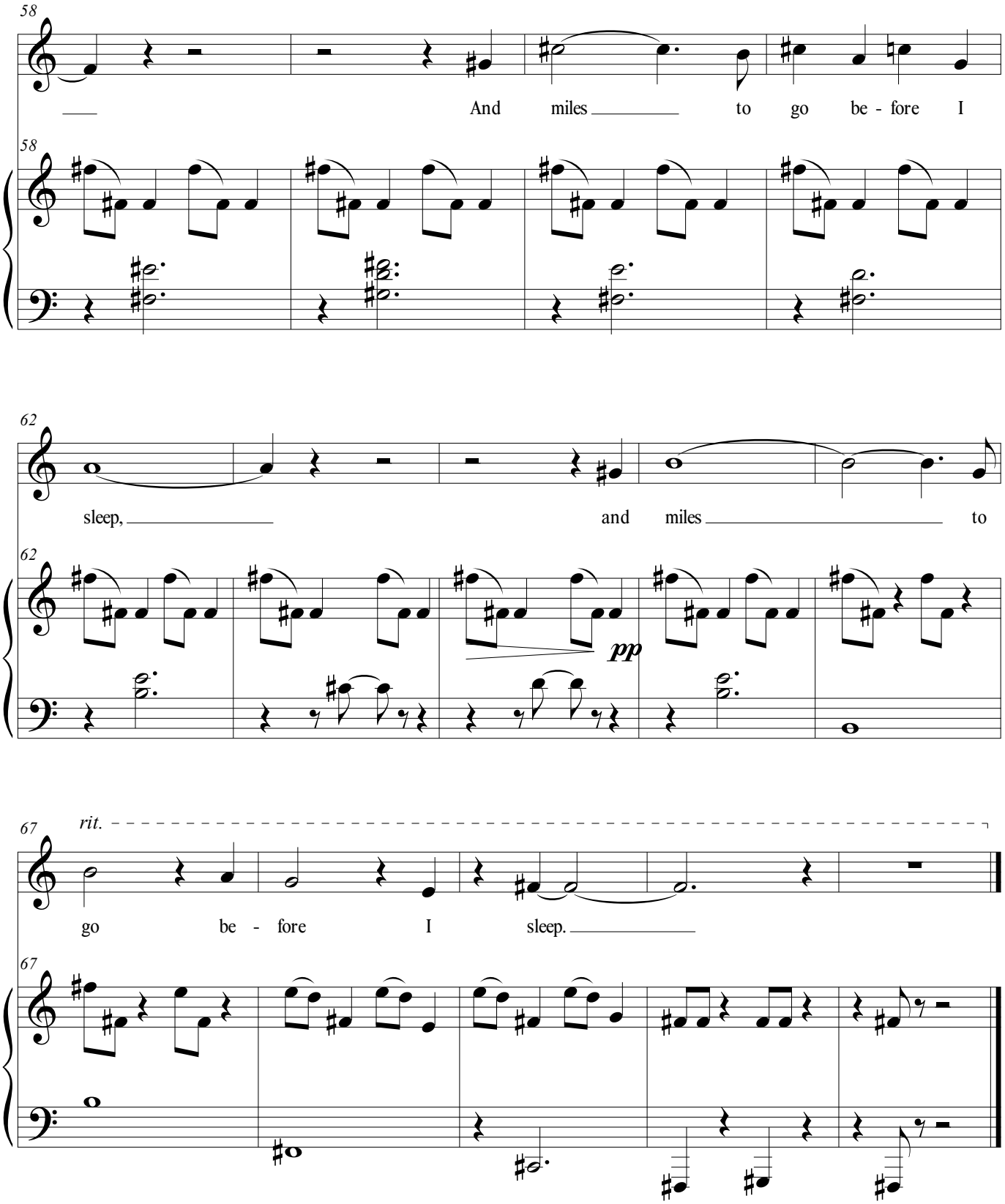

13
To see his woods fill up with snow.
13
17
My lit - ttle horse must think it queerr to stop with-out a
17
21
farm - house near Be-tween the woods and fro - zen lake the
21


25
dark - est eve - ning of the year, the
25
28
dark - est eve - ning of the year.
28
32
He gives his har - ness bells a shake To
32



Mm. 39-42: dynamics follow voice.


46
The woods are
46
50
love - ly, dark and deep,
50
54
But I have pro-mi-ses to keep,
54


58
And miles to go be - fore I
58
62
sleep, and miles to
62
pp
67
rit.
go be - fore I sleep.
67

The Corner of Night and Morning

High Voice

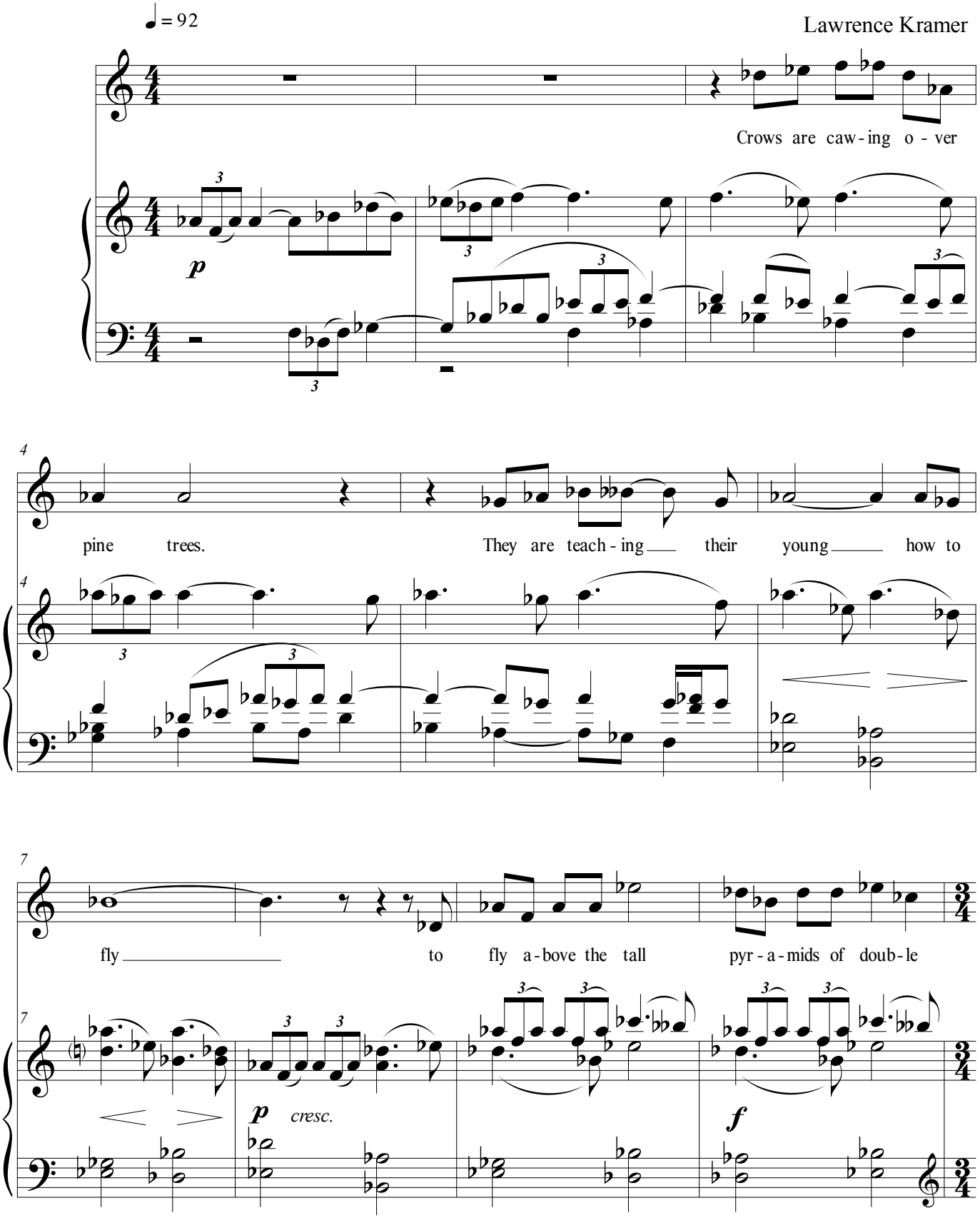
Crows are cawing over pine-trees,
They are teaching their young to fly
Above the tall pyramids of double cherries.
Rose lustre over black lacquer —
The feathers of the young birds reflect the rose-rising sun.
Caw! Caw!
I want to go to sleep,
But perhaps it is better to stand in the window
And watch the crows teaching their young to fly
Over the pines and the pyramidal cherries,
In the rose-gold light
Of five o'clock on a May morning.

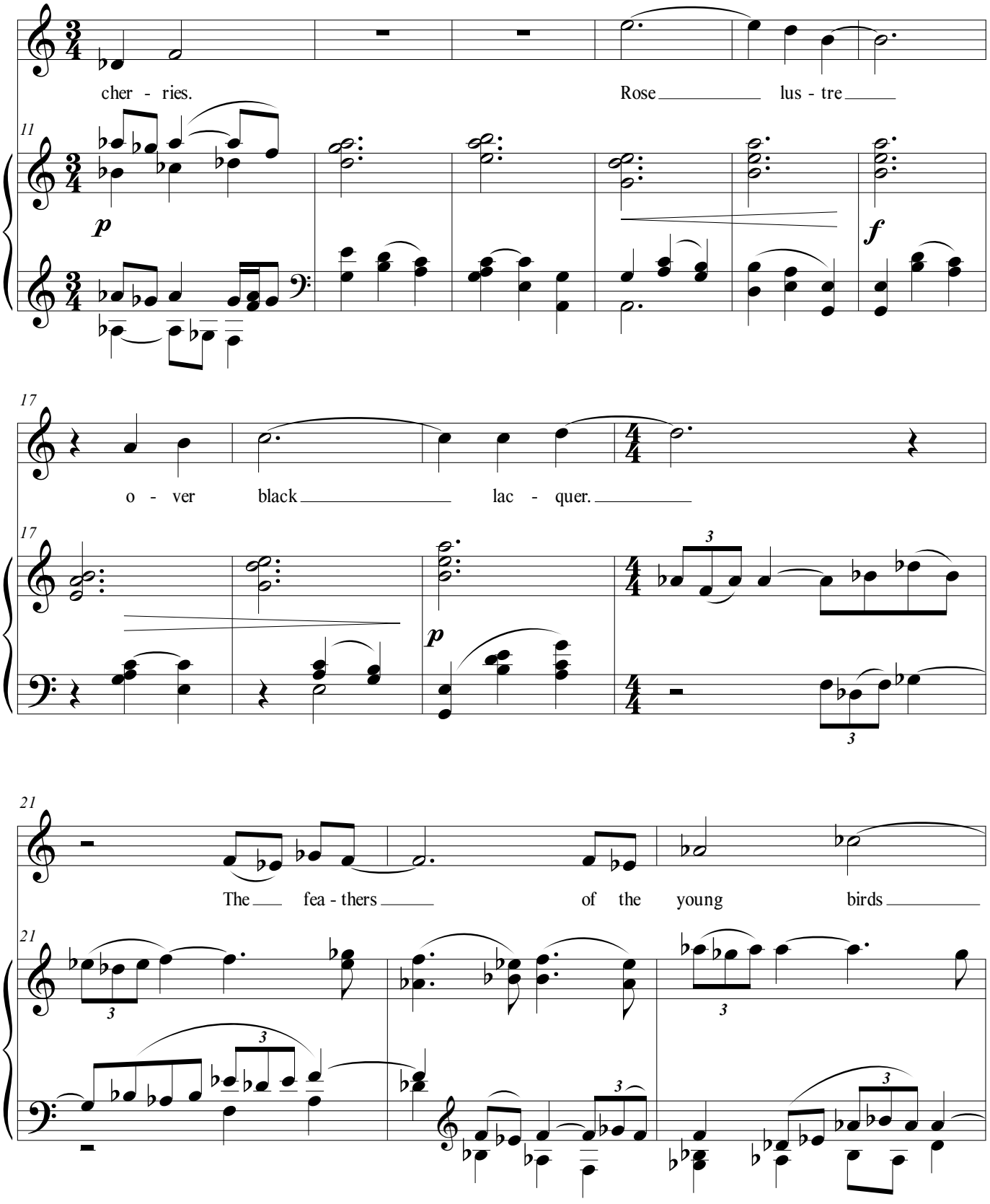
--Amy Lowell

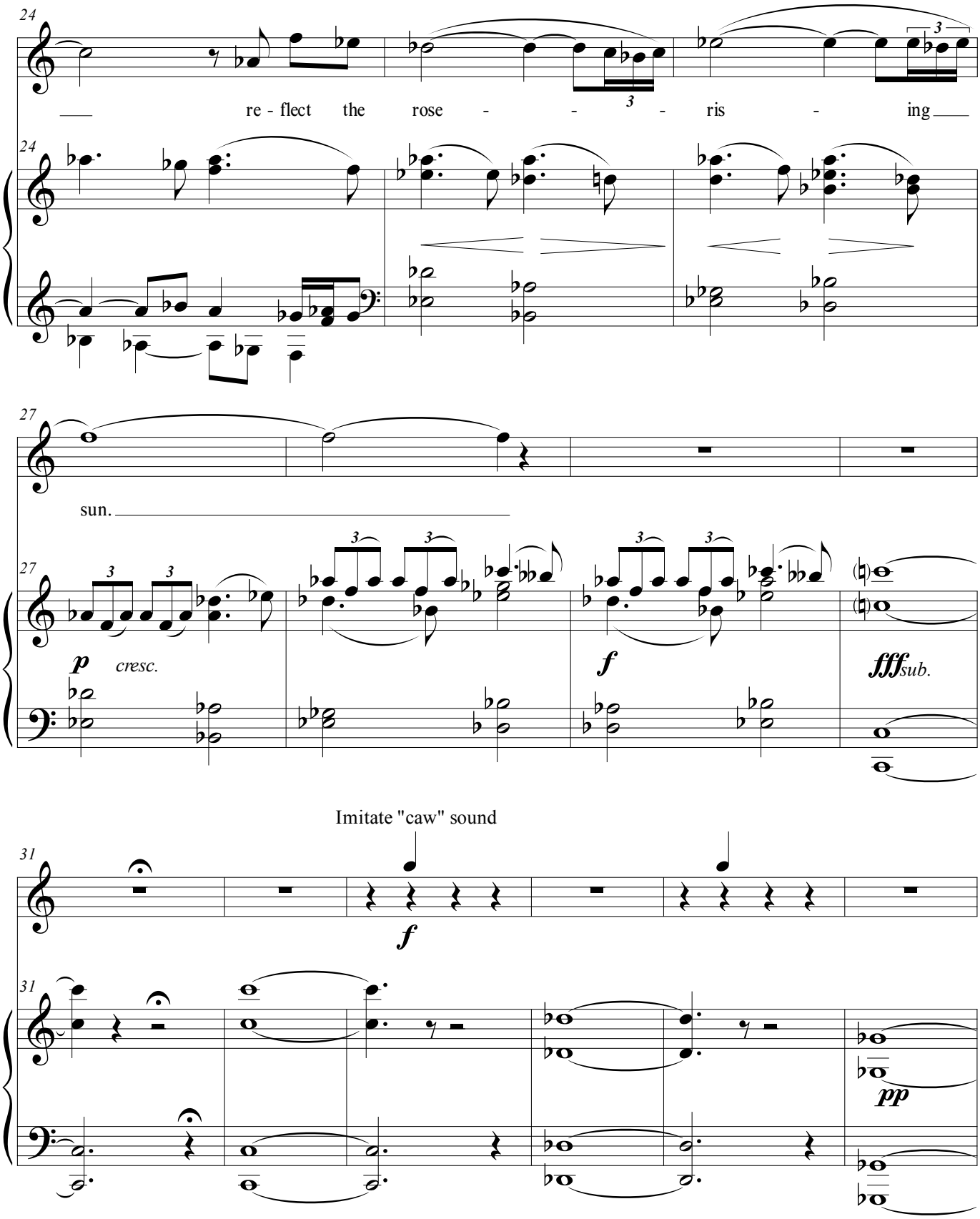
Written voice range: C4-G5
Tessitura: F4 - E♭5
Duration: 3:15

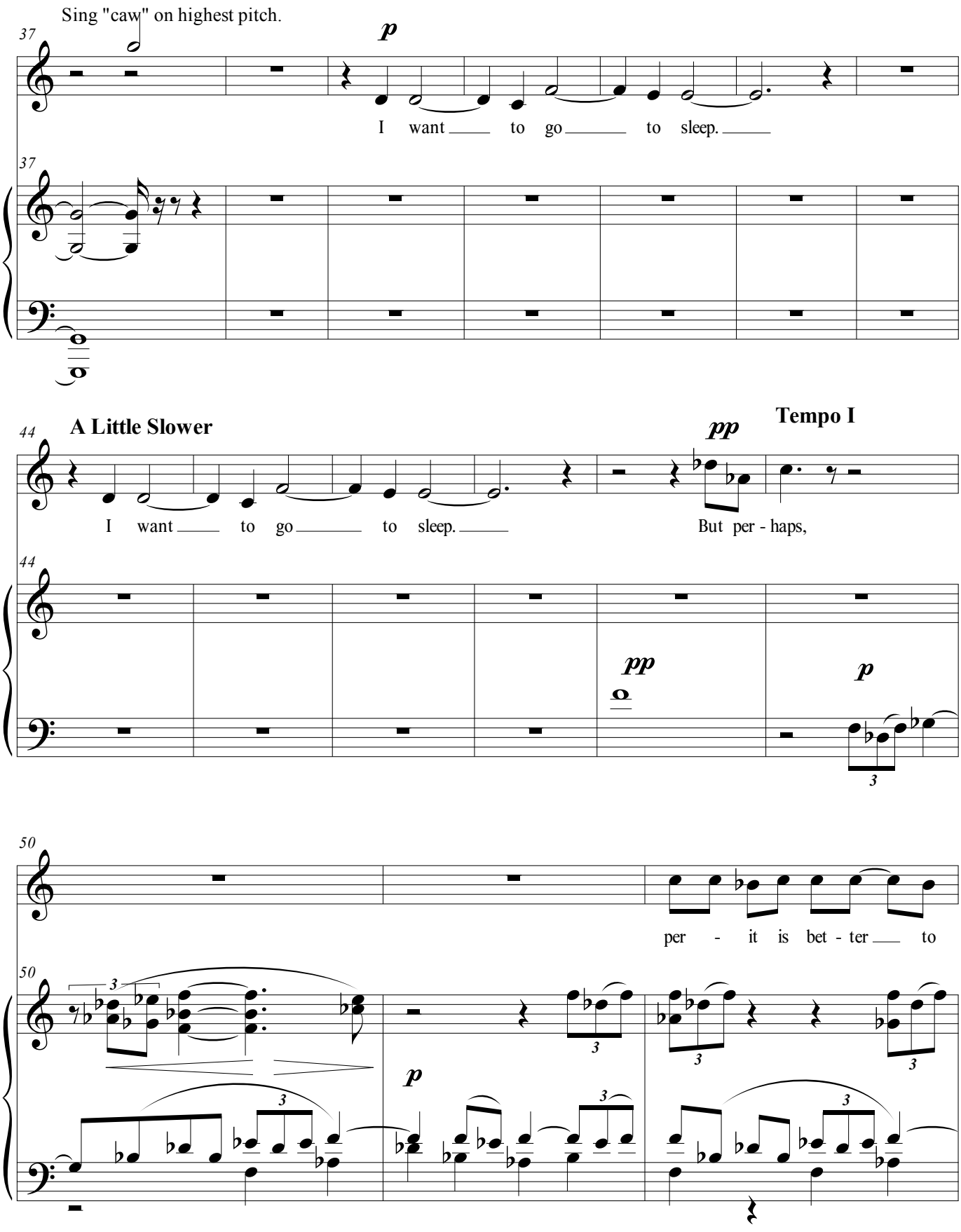
Composed 2018

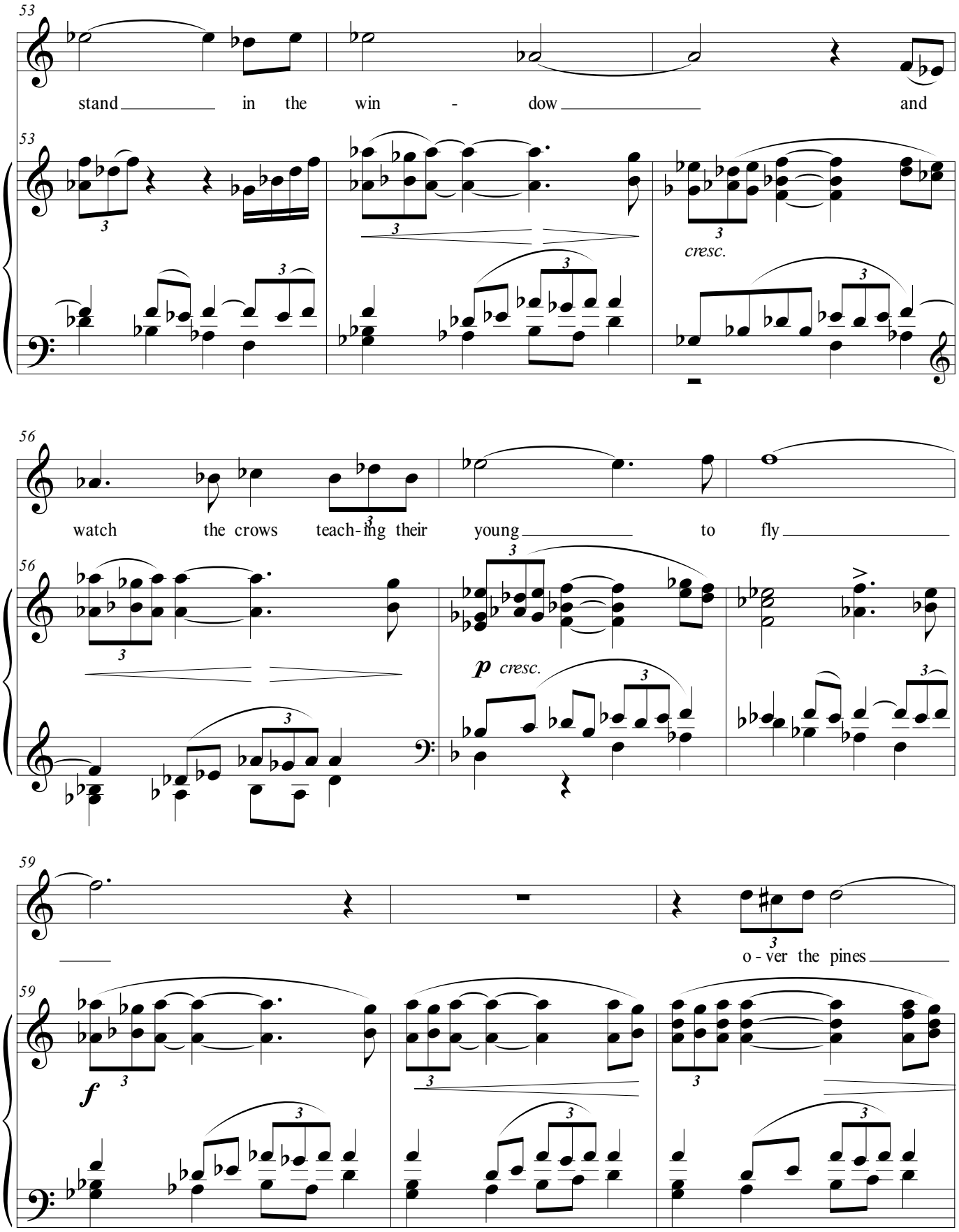
The Corner of Night and Morning

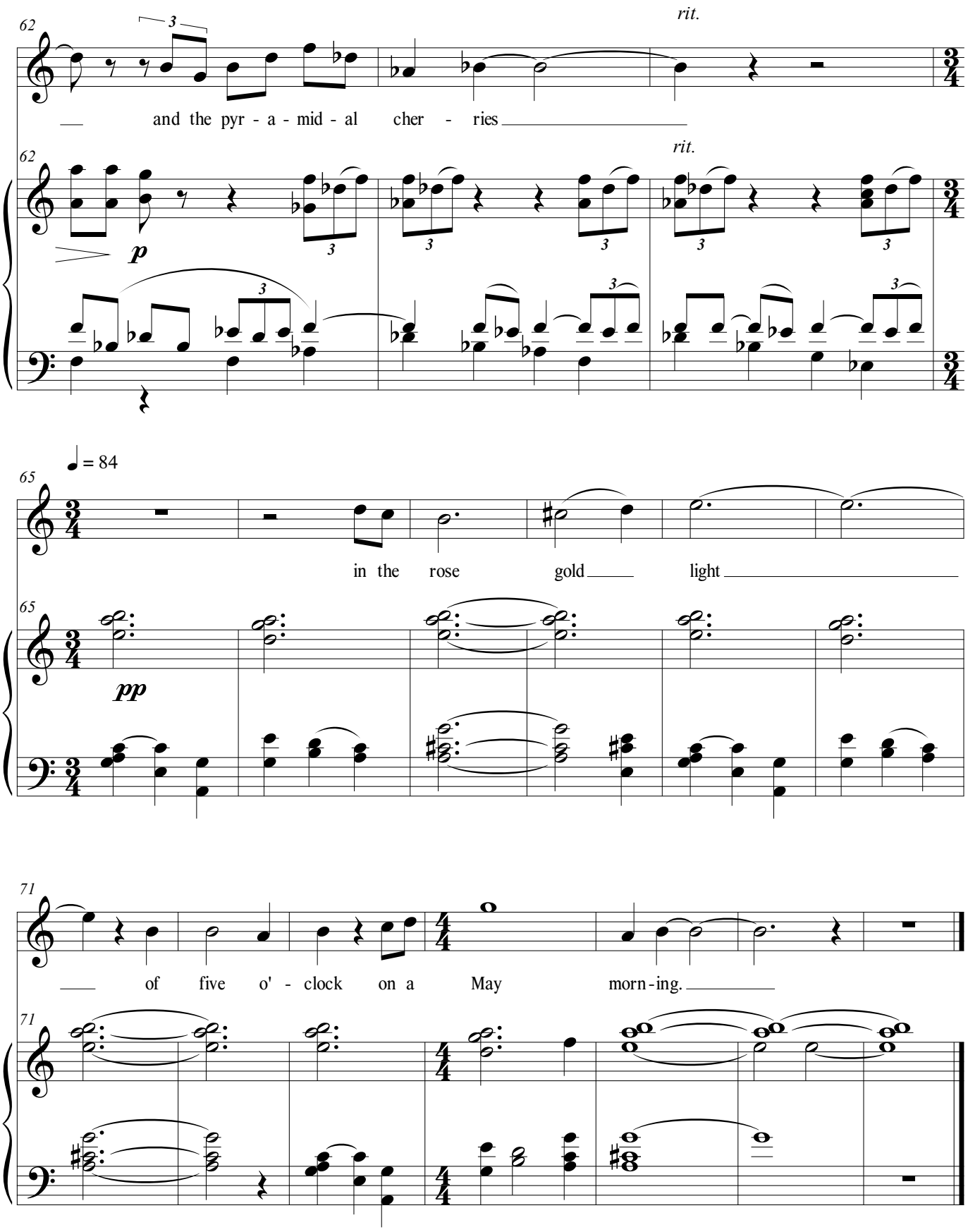



cher - ries.
Rose lus - tre
11
p
f
17
o - ver black lac - quer.
17
p
3
3
21
The fea - thers of the young birds
21
3
3
3
3
3


24
re - flect the rose - - - ris - ing
24
27
sun.
27
p cresc.
f
fff sub.
Imitate "caw" sound
31
f
31
pp


Sing "caw" on highest pitch.
37
p
I want to go to sleep.
37
44
A Little Slower
pp
Tempo I
I want to go to sleep.
But per - haps,
44
pp
p
3
50
per - it is bet - ter to
50
3
p
3
3
3
3
3
3
3 3


53
stand in the win - dow and
cresc.
56
watch the crows teach-ing their young to fly
p cresc.
59
o - ver the pines
f


62
rit.
and the pyr - a - mid - al cher - ries
p
65
♩ = 84
in the rose gold light
pp
71
of five o' - clock on a May morn - ing.

From “The Jumblies"

High Voice

They went to sea in a Sieve, they did,
  In a Sieve they went to sea:
In spite of all their friends could say,
On a winter’s morn, on a stormy day,
  In a Sieve they went to sea!

And when the Sieve turned round and round,
And every one cried, ‘You’ll all be drowned!’
They called aloud, “Our Sieve ain’t big,
But we don’t care a button! we don’t care a fig!
  In a Sieve we’ll go to sea!”

  Far and few, far and few,
    Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
  Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
    And they went to sea in a Sieve.

And all night long they sailed away;
  And when the sun went down,
They whistled and warbled a moony song
To the echoing sound of a coppery gong. . .

  “Far and few, far and few,
    Are the lands where the Jumblies live;
  Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
    And they went to sea in a Sieve.”

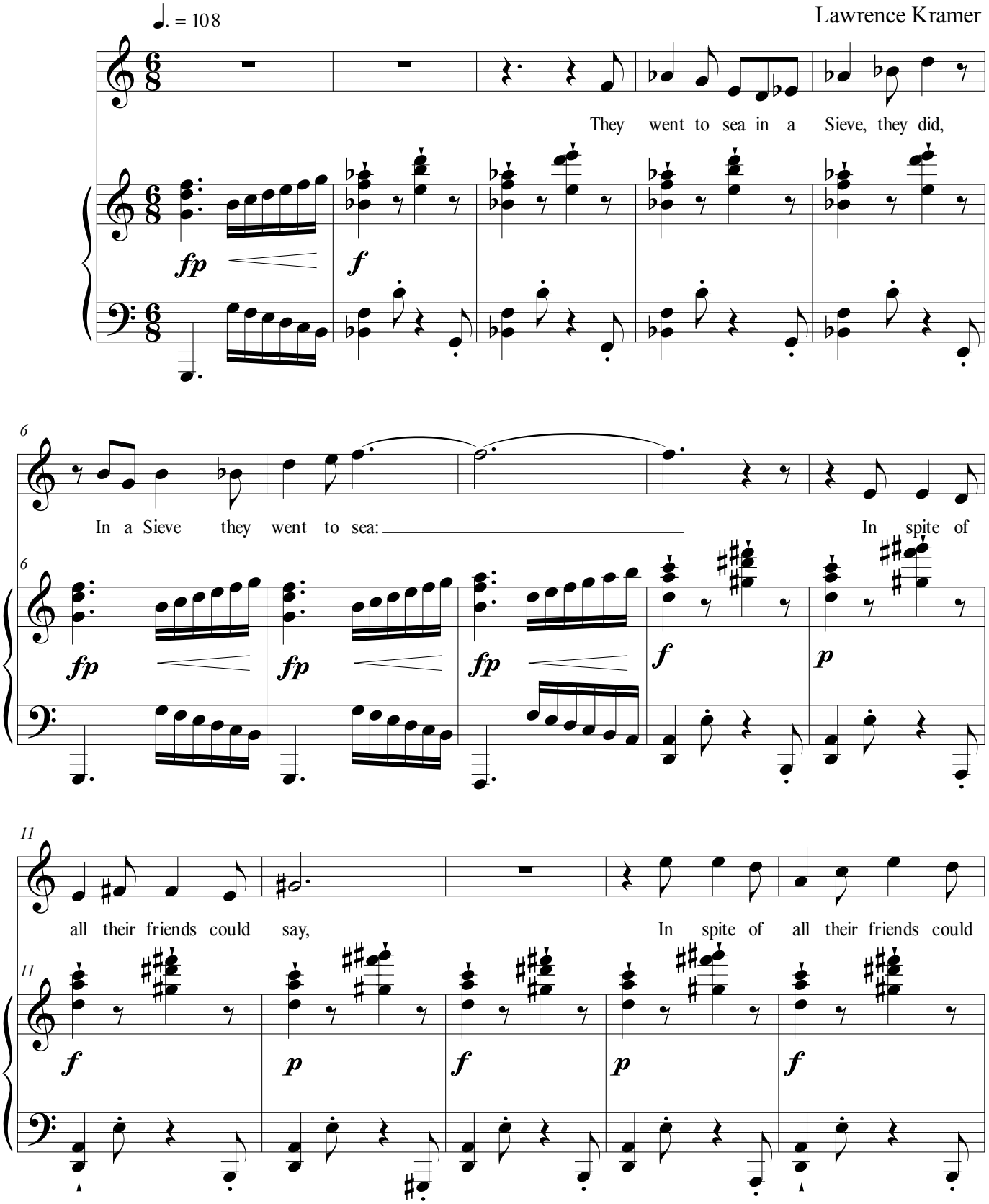
--Edward Lear

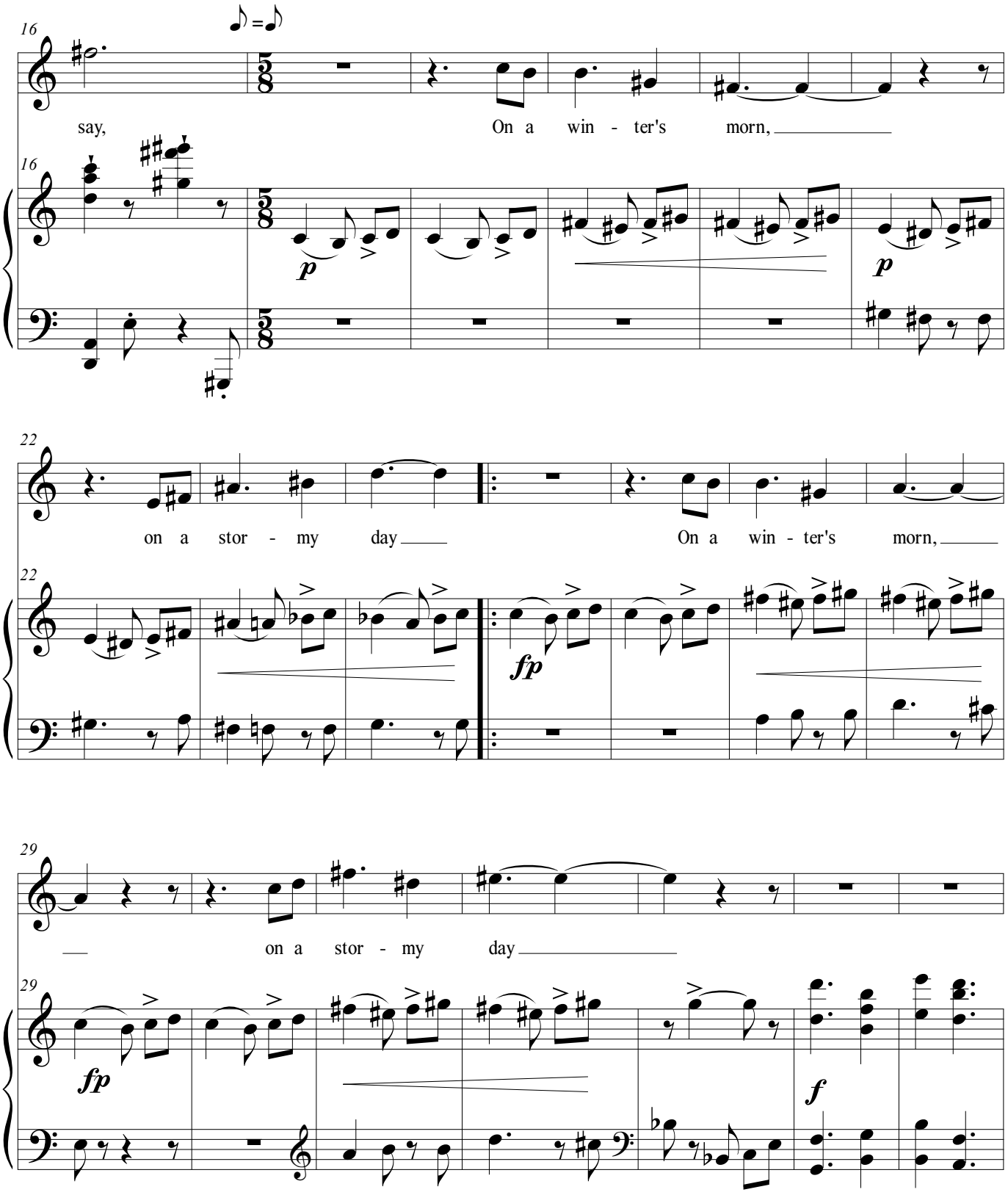
Written Voice Range: D4-A♭5
Tessitura: F♯4 - D5
Duation: 4 minutes

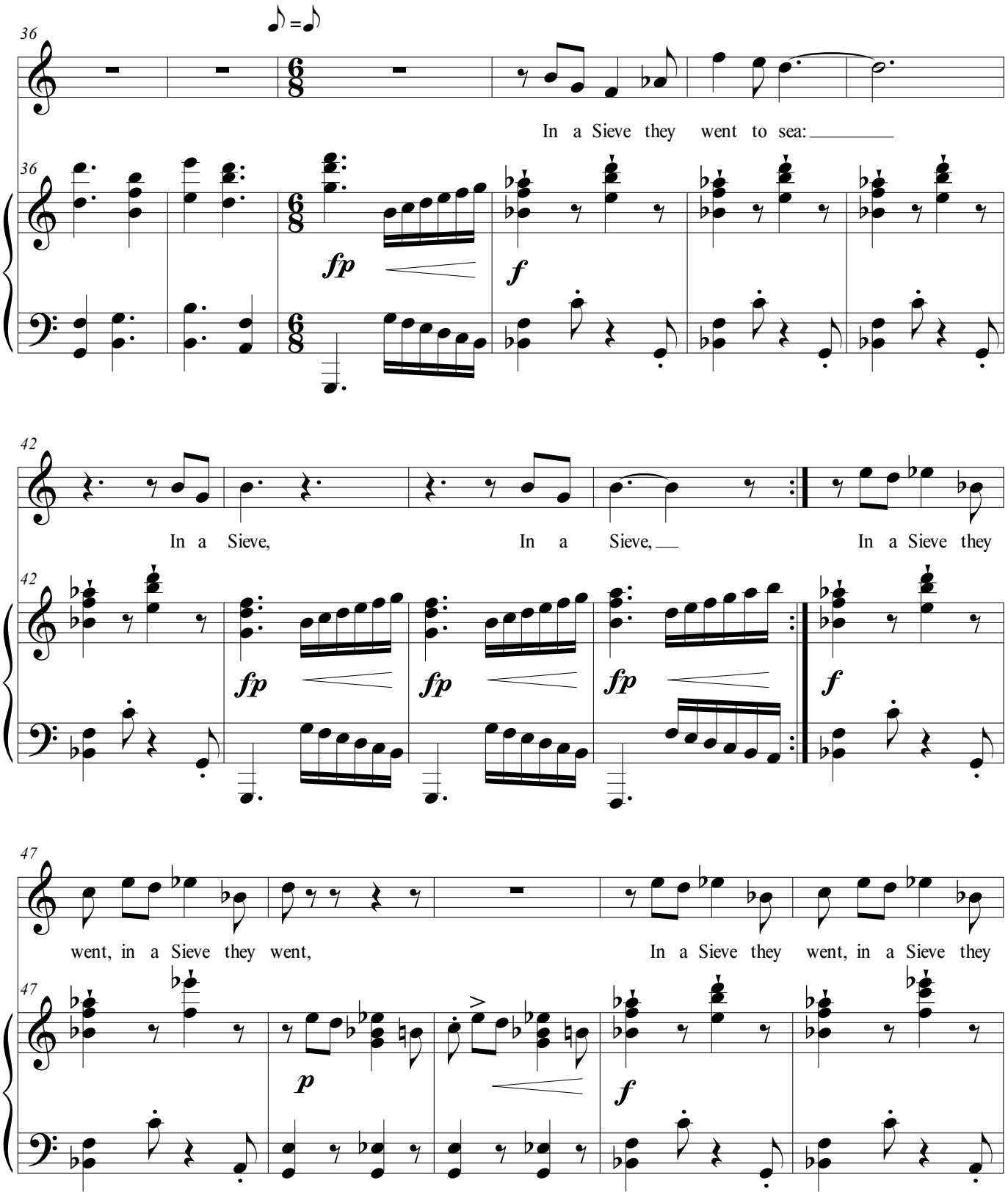
Composed 2020

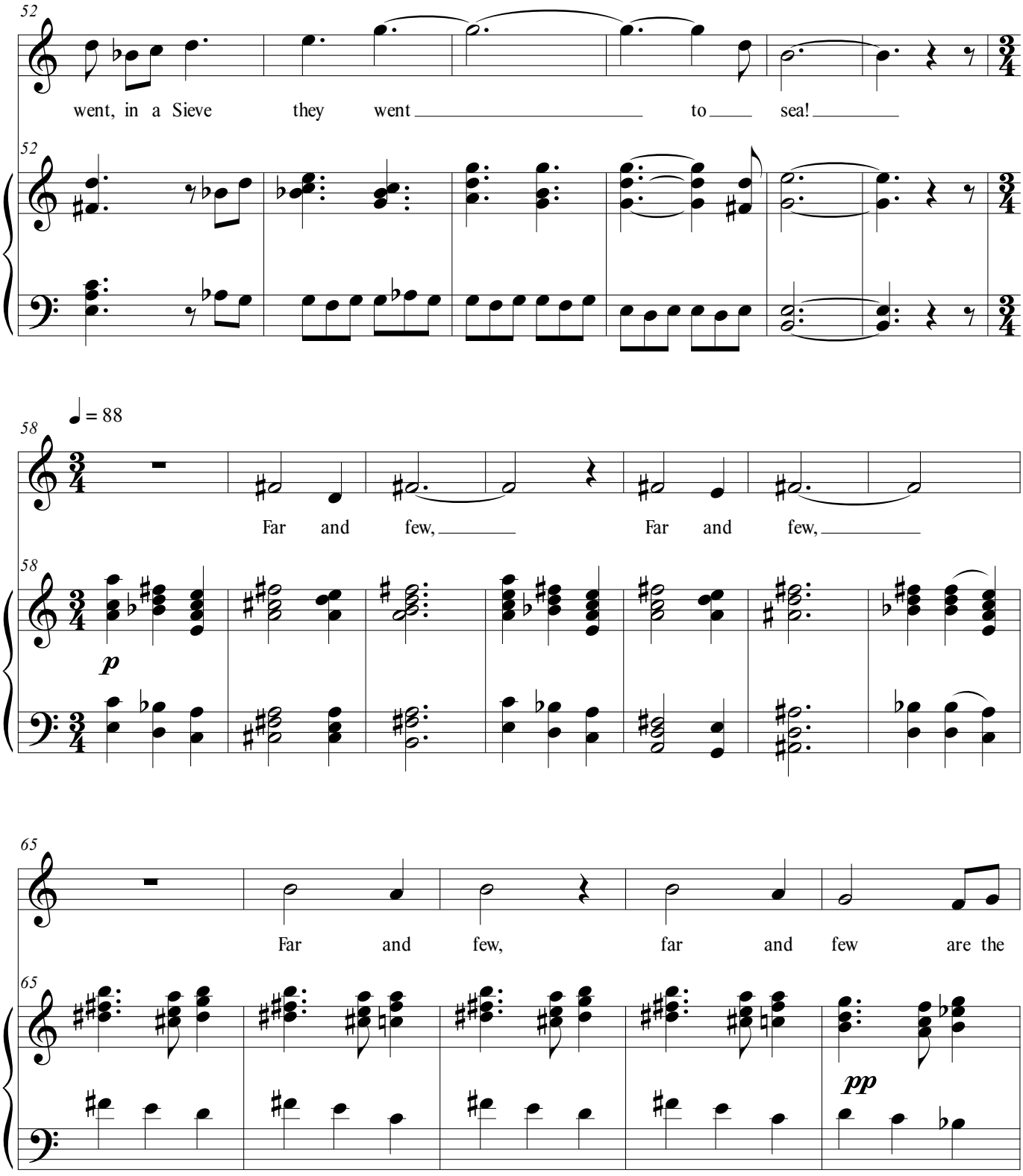
The Jumblies

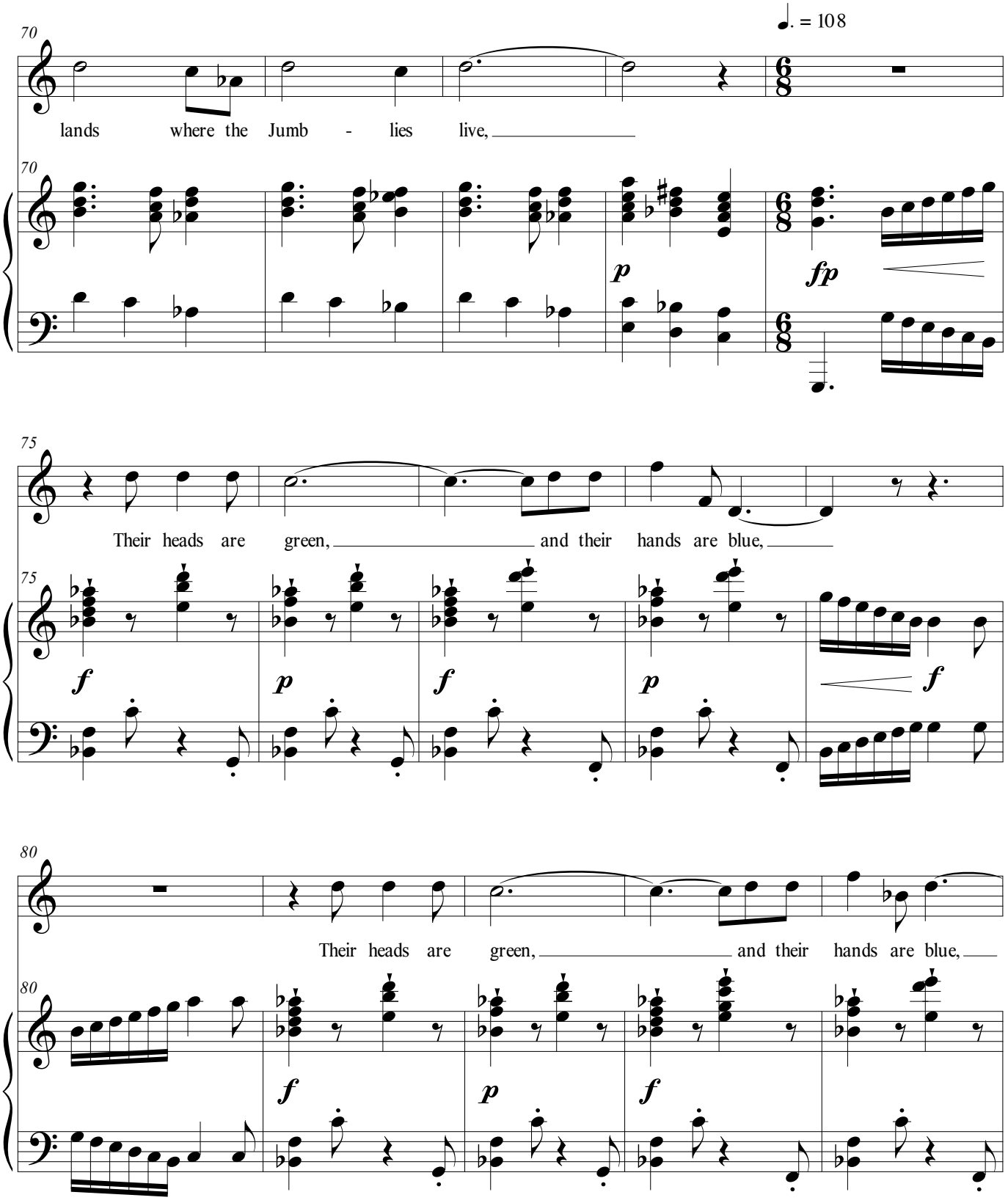
Lawrence Kramer

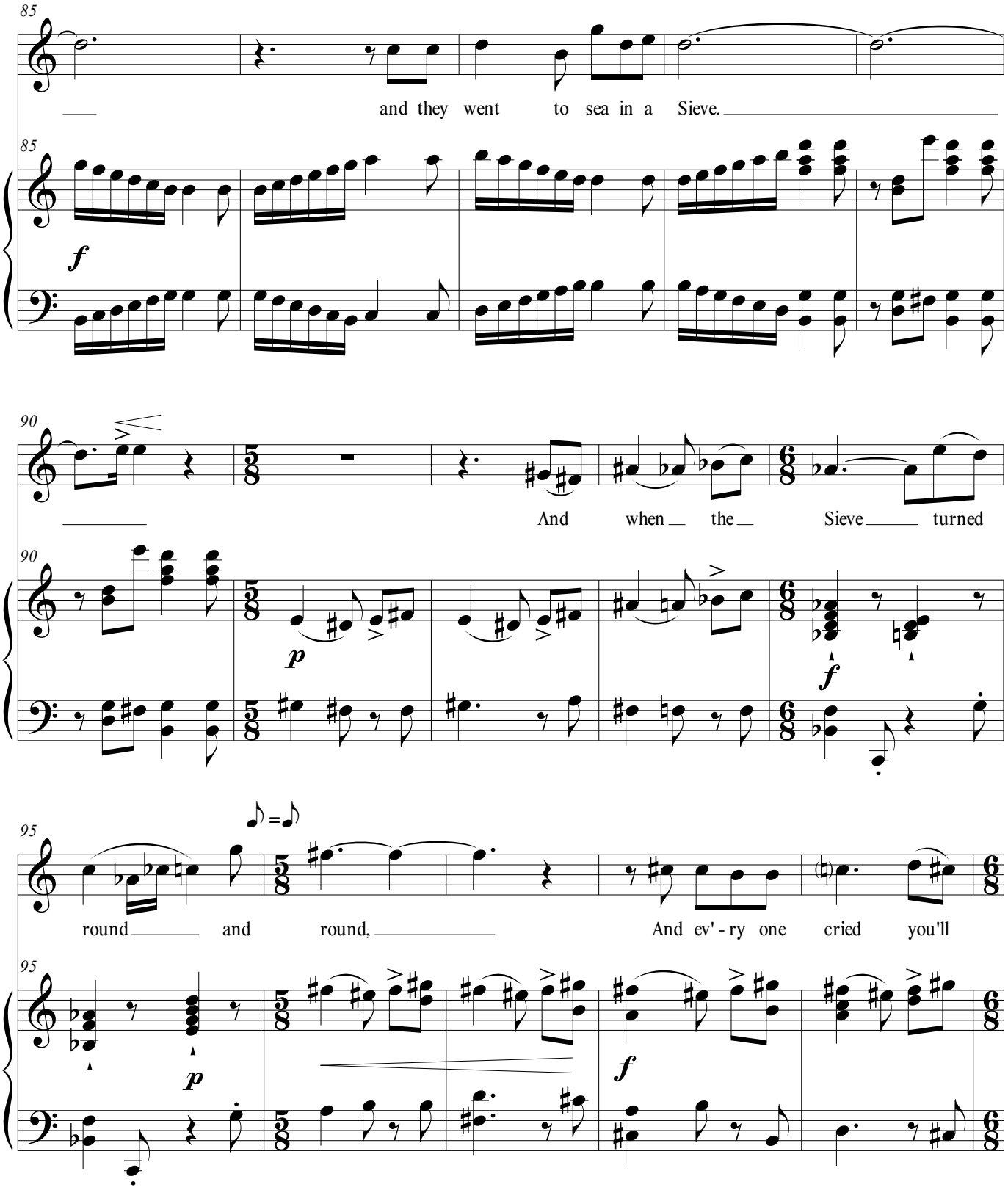


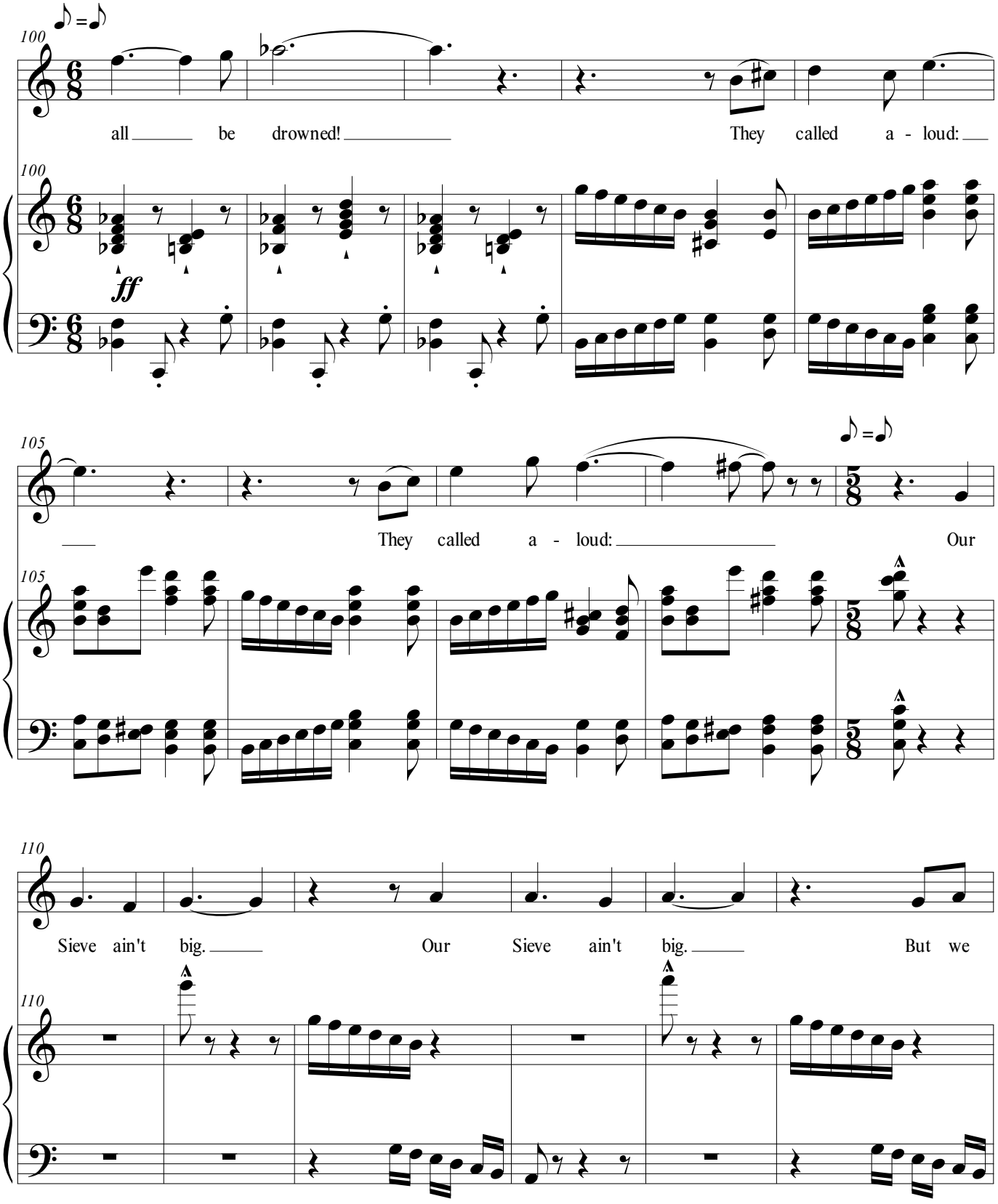

16
say,
On a win - ter's morn,
16
p
p
22
on a stor - my day
On a win - ter's morn,
22
fp
29
on a stor - my day
29
fp
f

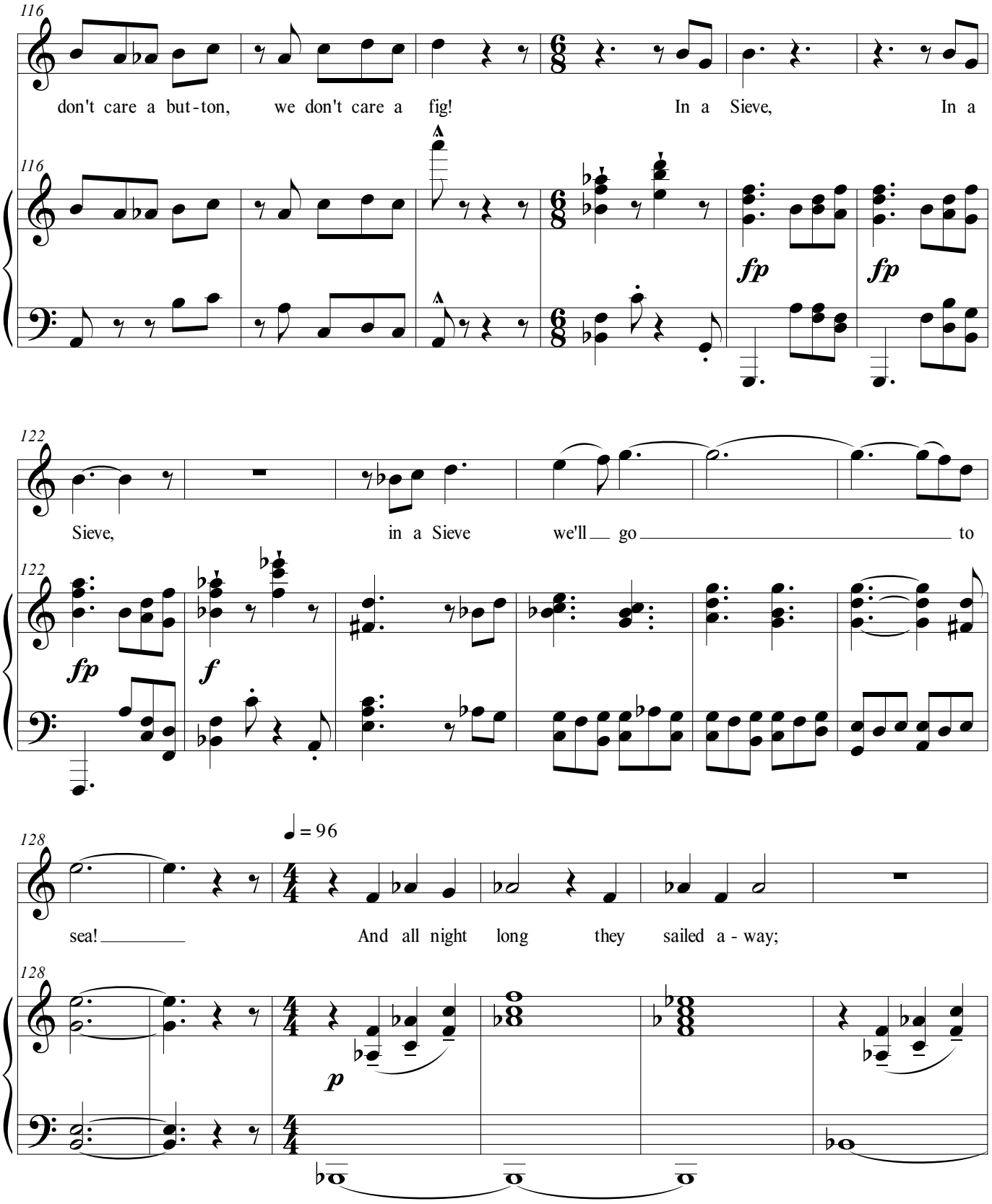

36
In a Sieve they went to sea:
fp
f
42
In a Sieve, In a Sieve, In a Sieve they
fp
fp
fp
f
47
went, in a Sieve they went, In a Sieve they went, in a Sieve they
p
f

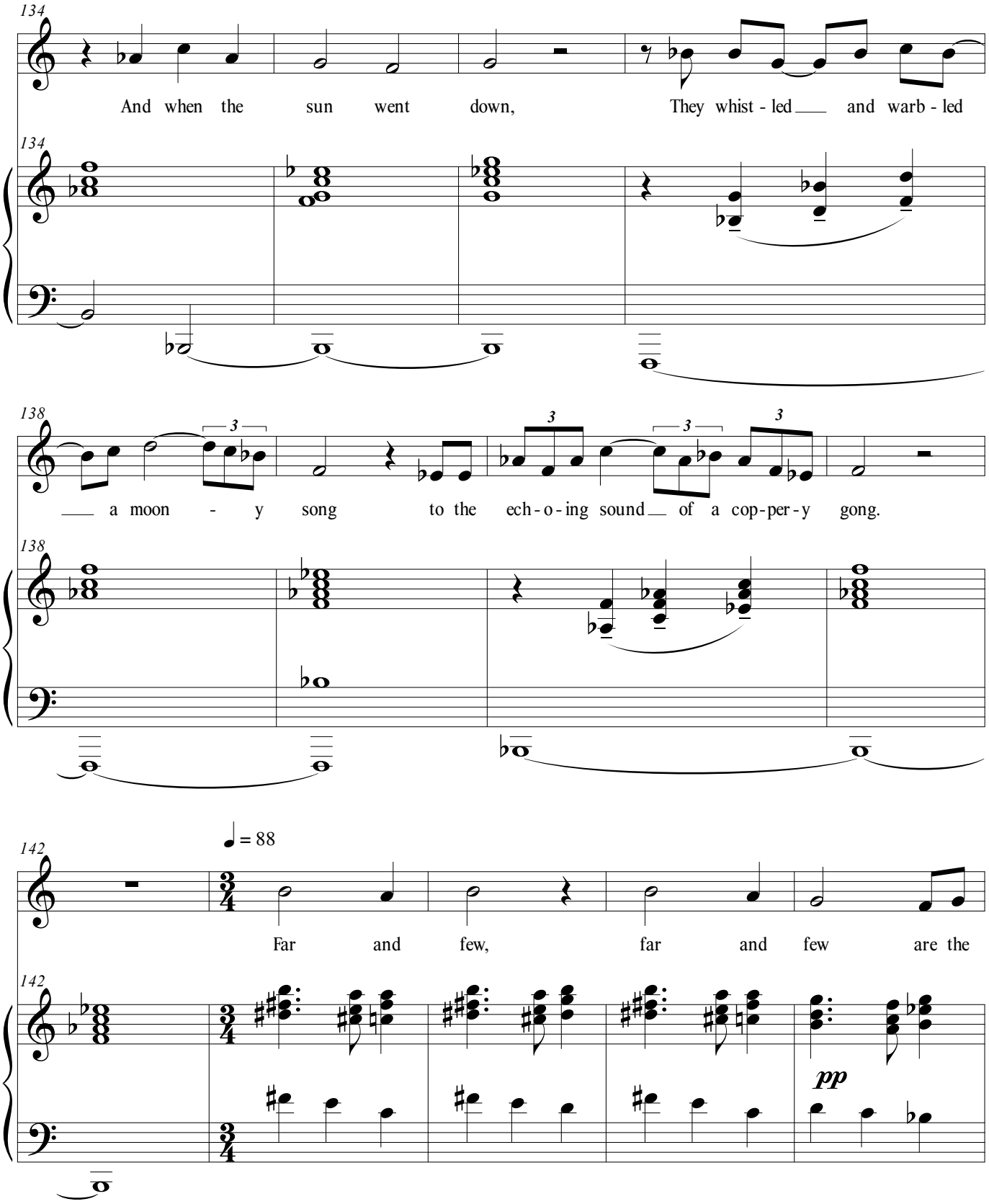

52
went, in a Sieve they went to sea!
52
58
♩ = 88
Far and few, Far and few,
58
p
65
Far and few, far and few are the
65
pp

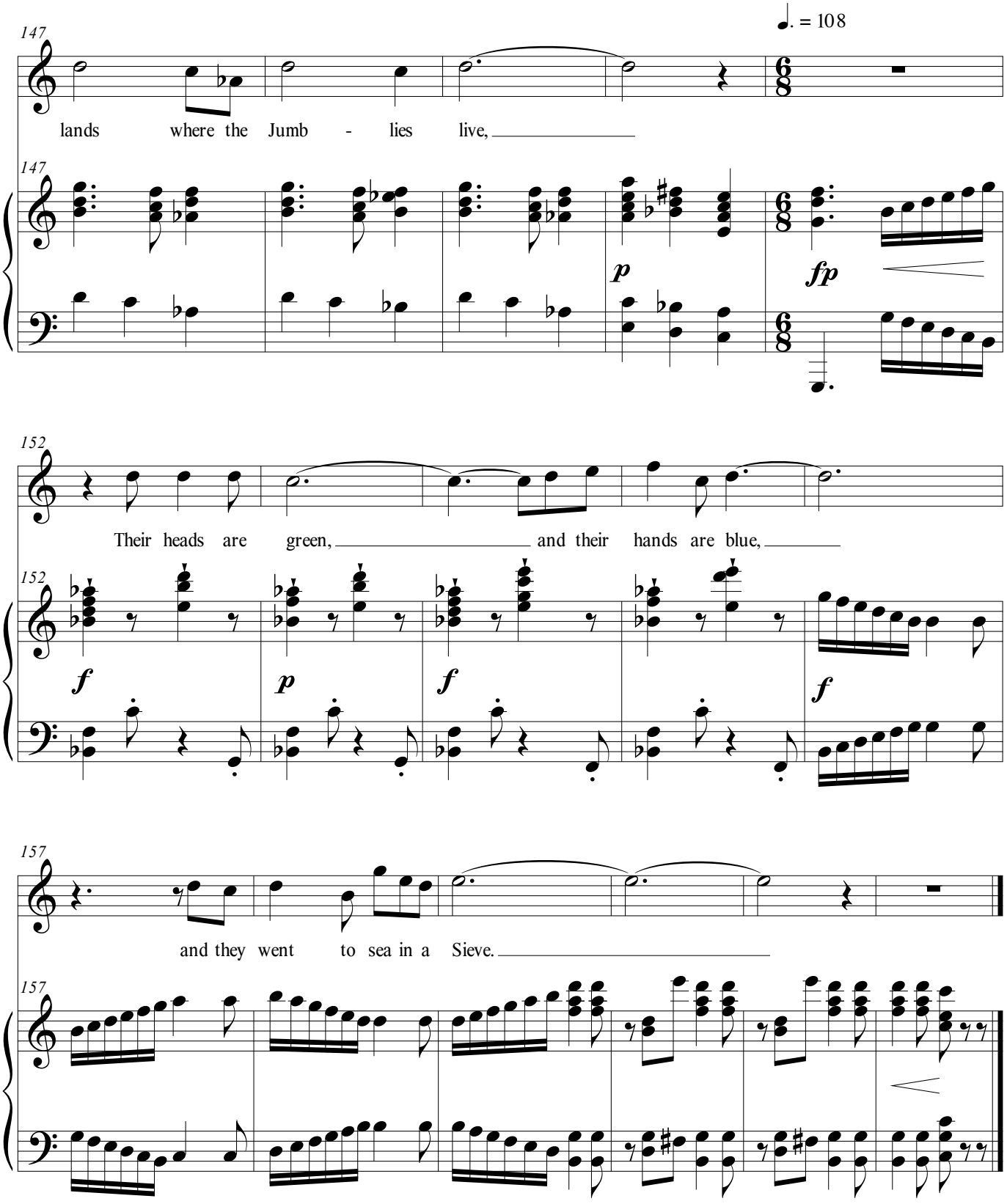

70
lands where the Jumb - lies live,
70
p
fp
75
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
75
f
p
f
p
f
80
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
80
f
p
f


85
and they went to sea in a Sieve.
85
f
90
And when the Sieve turned
90
p
f
95
round and round,
And ev' - ry one cried you'll
95
p
f


100
all be drowned!
They called a - loud:
ff
105
They called a - loud:
Our
110
Sieve ain't big.
Our Sieve ain't big.
But we


116
don't care a but-ton, we don't care a fig! In a Sieve, In a
fp
fp
122
Sieve, in a Sieve we'll go to
fp
f
128
♩ = 96
sea! And all night long they sailed a - way;
p


134
And when the sun went down, They whist - led and warb - led
134
138
3
3
3
3
a moon - y song to the ech - o - ing sound of a cop - per - y gong.
138
142
♩ = 88
Far and few, far and few are the
142
pp


147
♩. = 108
lands where the Jumb - lies live,
p
fp
152
Their heads are green, and their hands are blue,
f
p
f
f
157
and they went to sea in a Sieve.

The Soldier's Tale

Tenor

I am an ancient reluctant conscript.

On the soup wagons of Xerxes I was a cleaner of pans.
On the march of Miltiades' phalanx I had a haft and head;
I had a bristling gleaming spear-handle.

Red-headed Cæsar picked me for a teamster.
He said, "Go to work, you Tuscan bastard,
Rome calls for a man who can drive horses."

The units of conquest led by Charles the Twelfth,
The whirling whimsical Napoleonic columns:
They saw me one of the horseshoers.

I trimmed the feet of a white horse Bonaparte swept the night stars with.

Lincoln said, "Get into the game; your nation takes you."
And I drove a wagon and team and I had my arm shot off
At Spottsylvania Court House.

I am an ancient reluctant conscript.

--Carl Sandburg

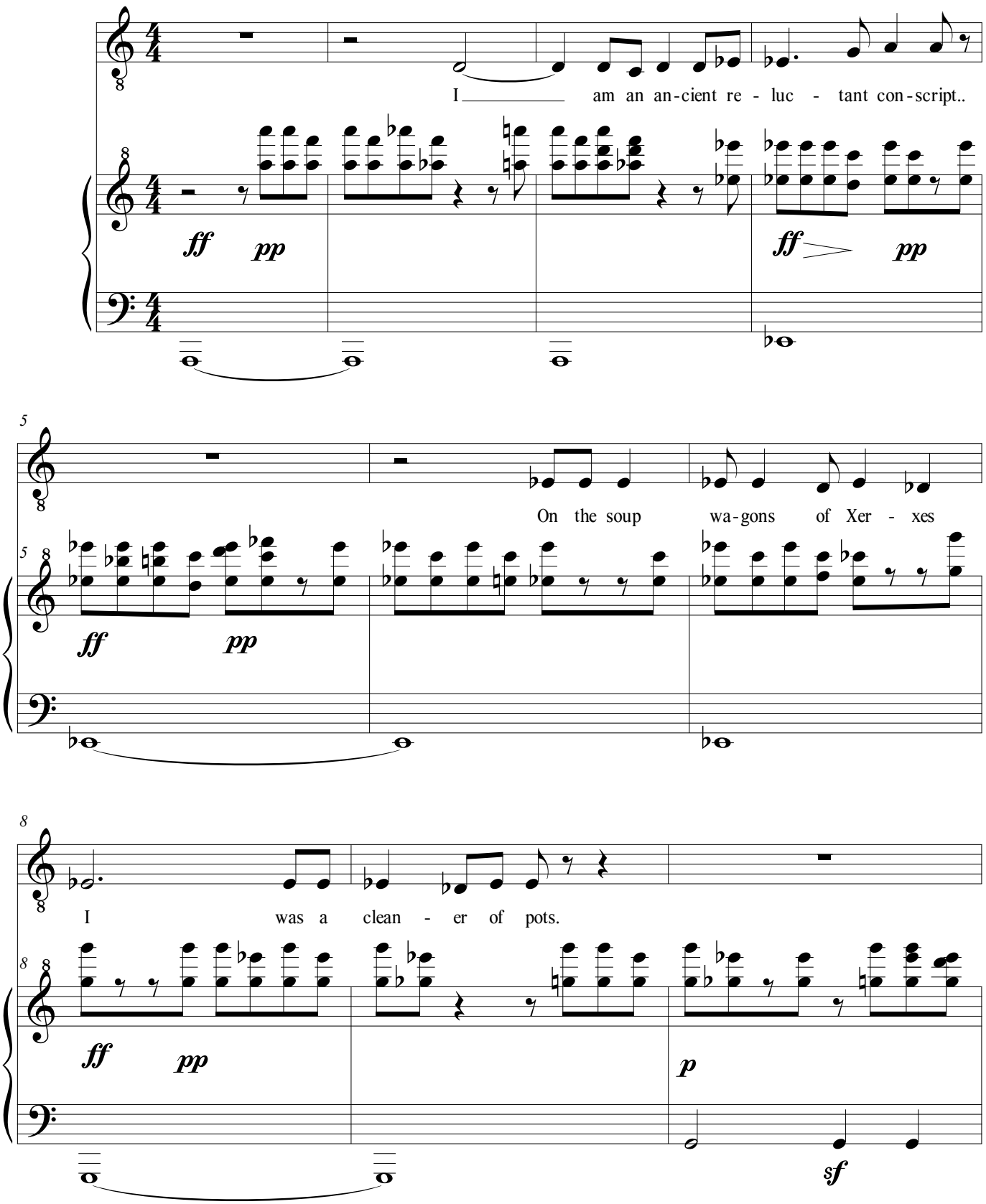
Voice range: C3 - G4
Tessitura: F3 - E♭4
Duration: 4 minutes

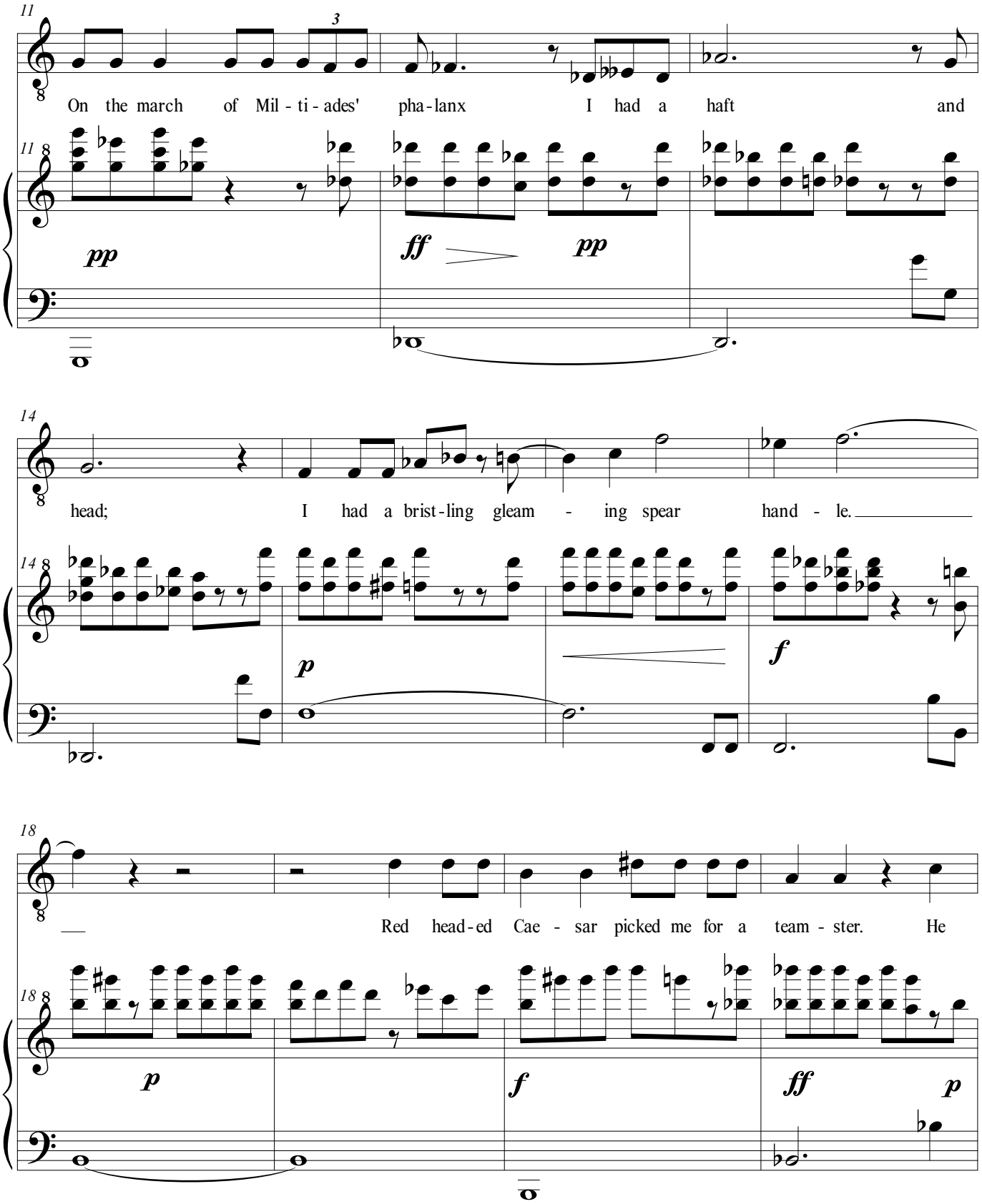
Composed 2017

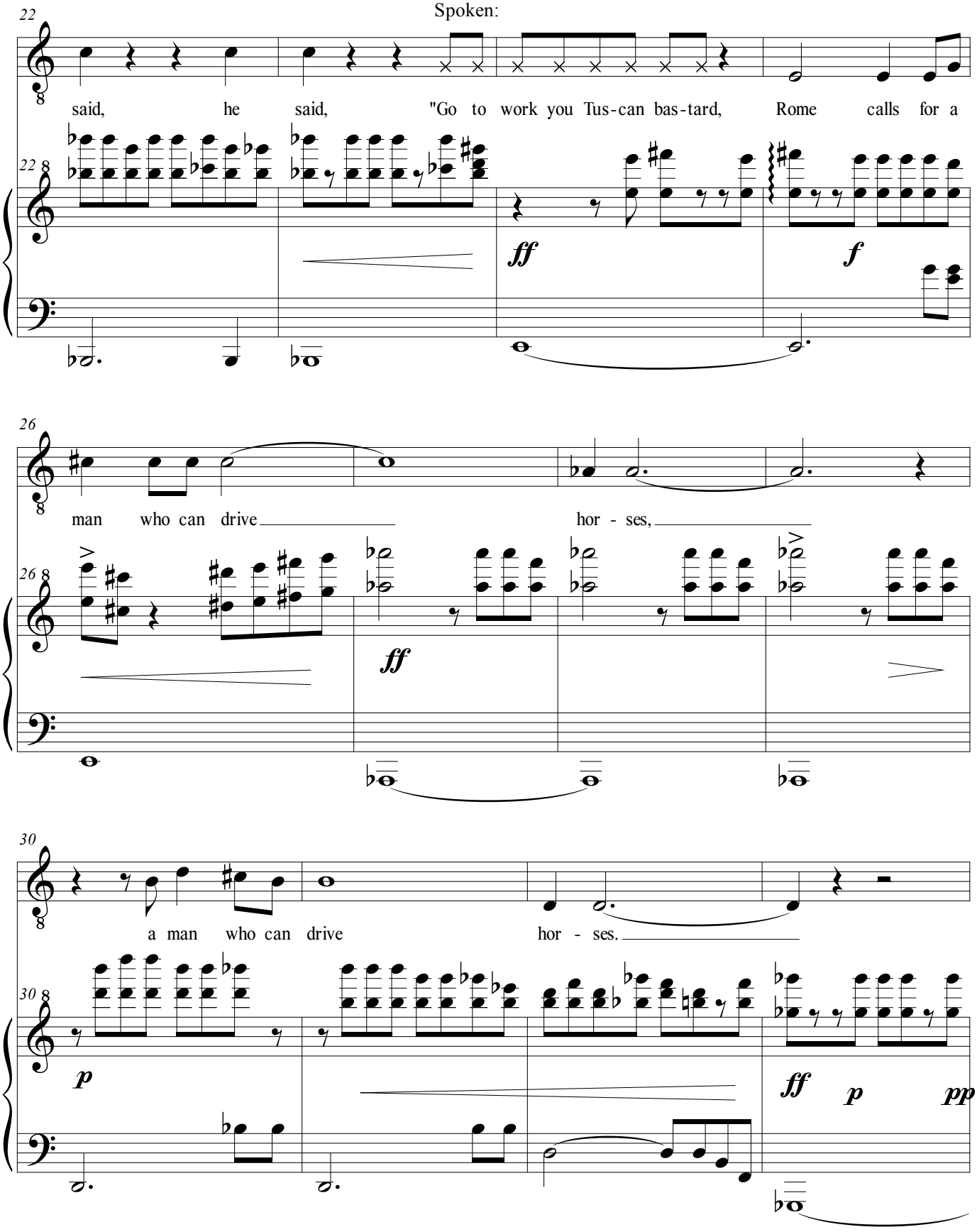
The Soldier's Tale

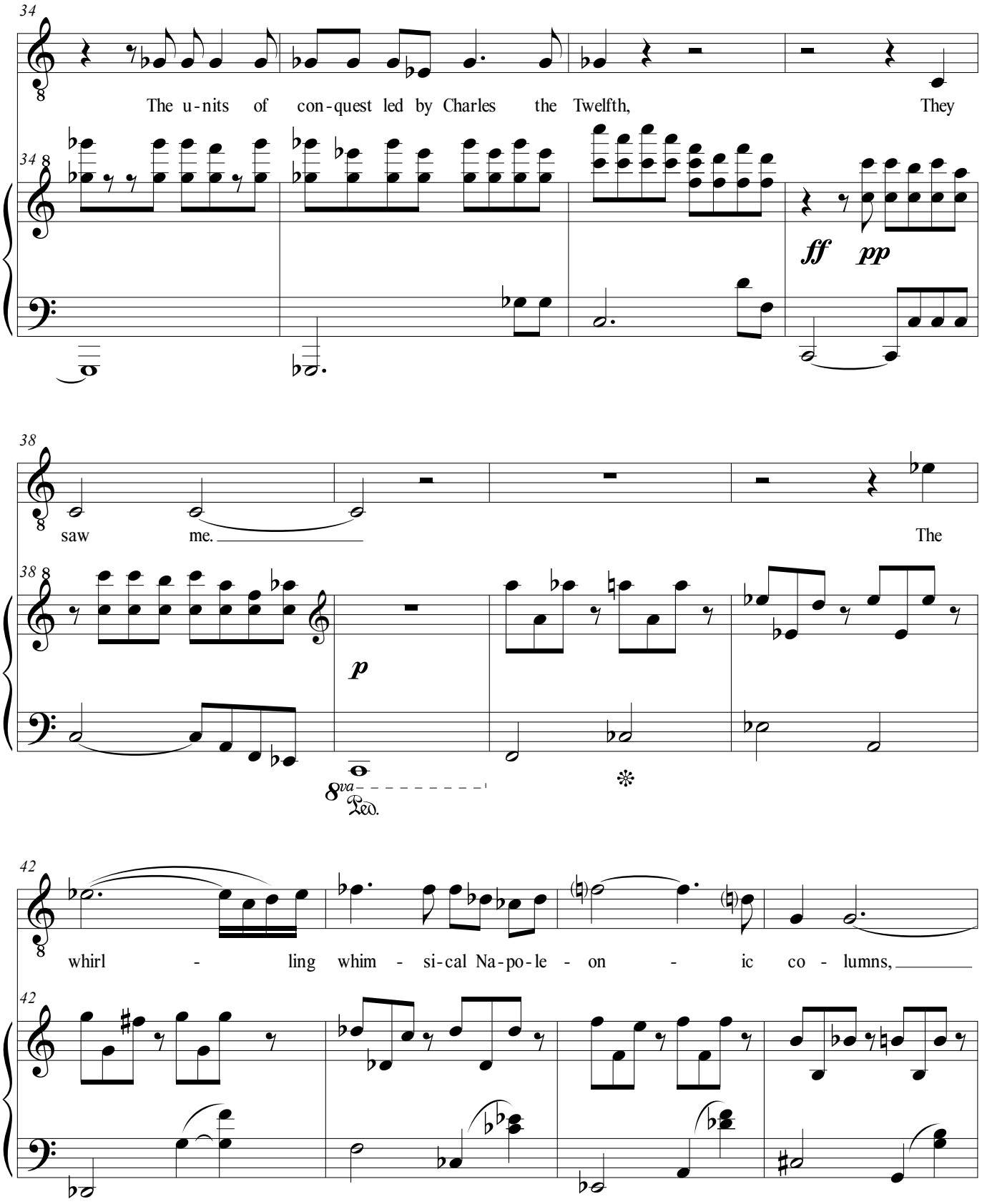
Moderato (♩ = c. 108)

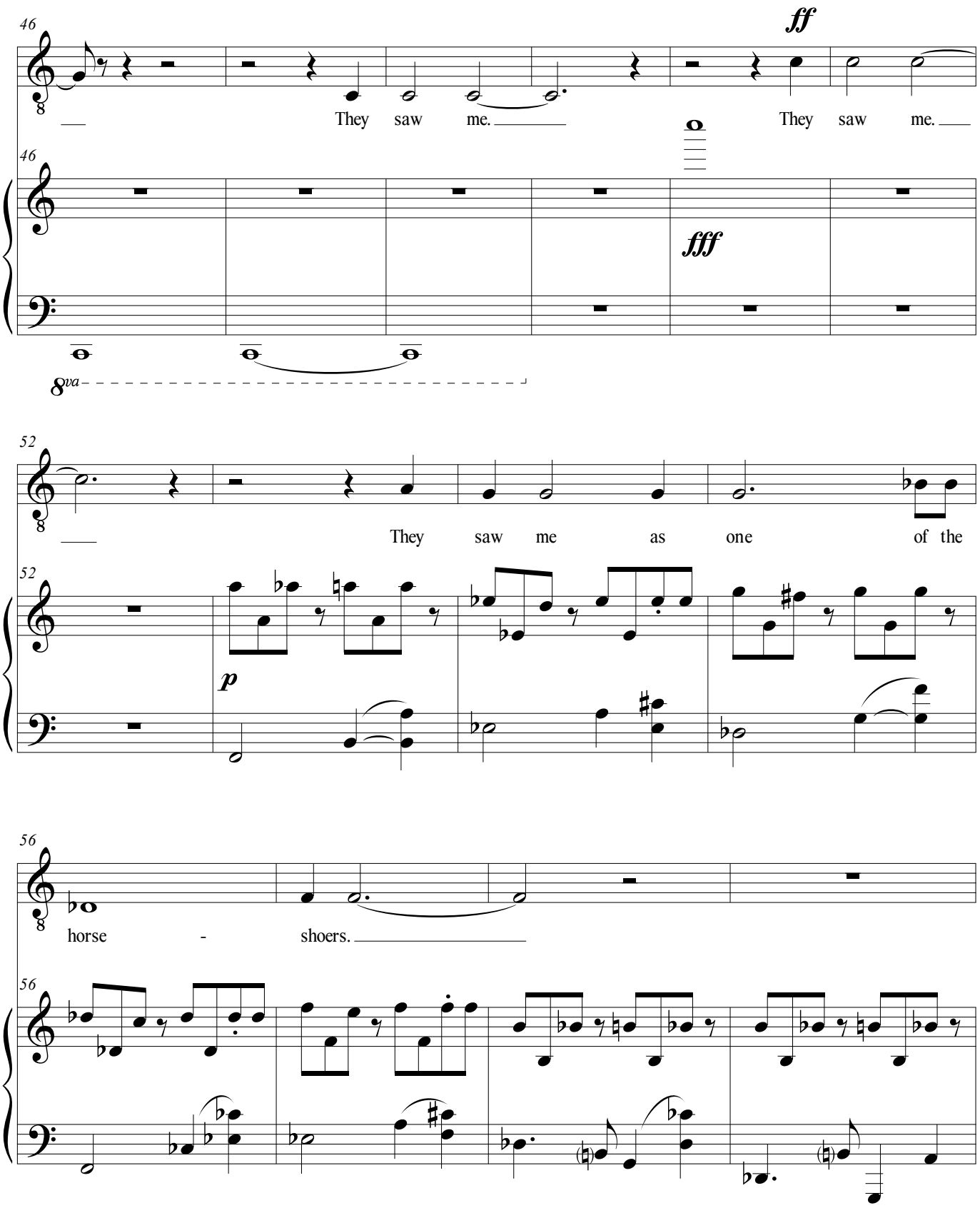
Lawrence Kramer

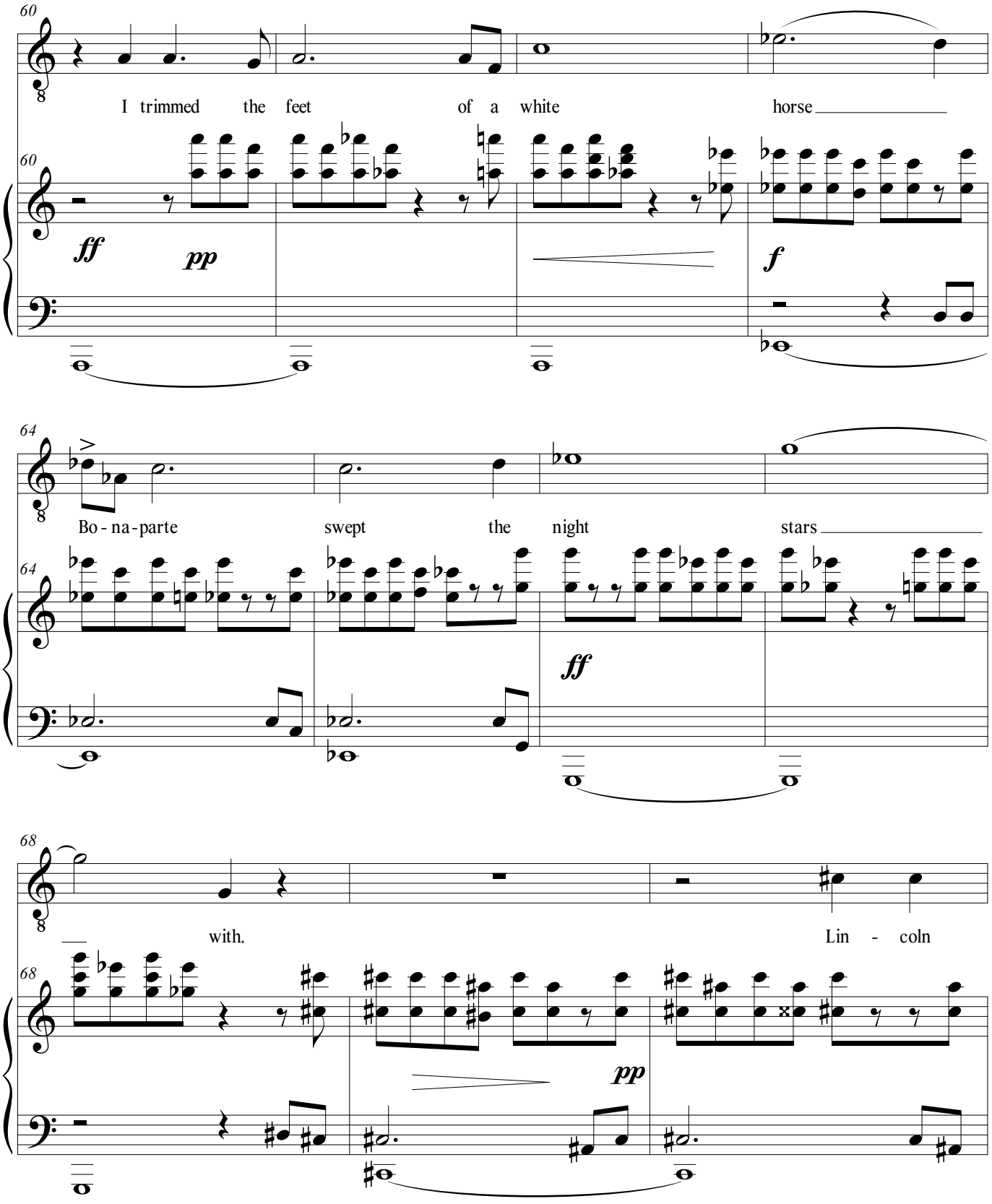


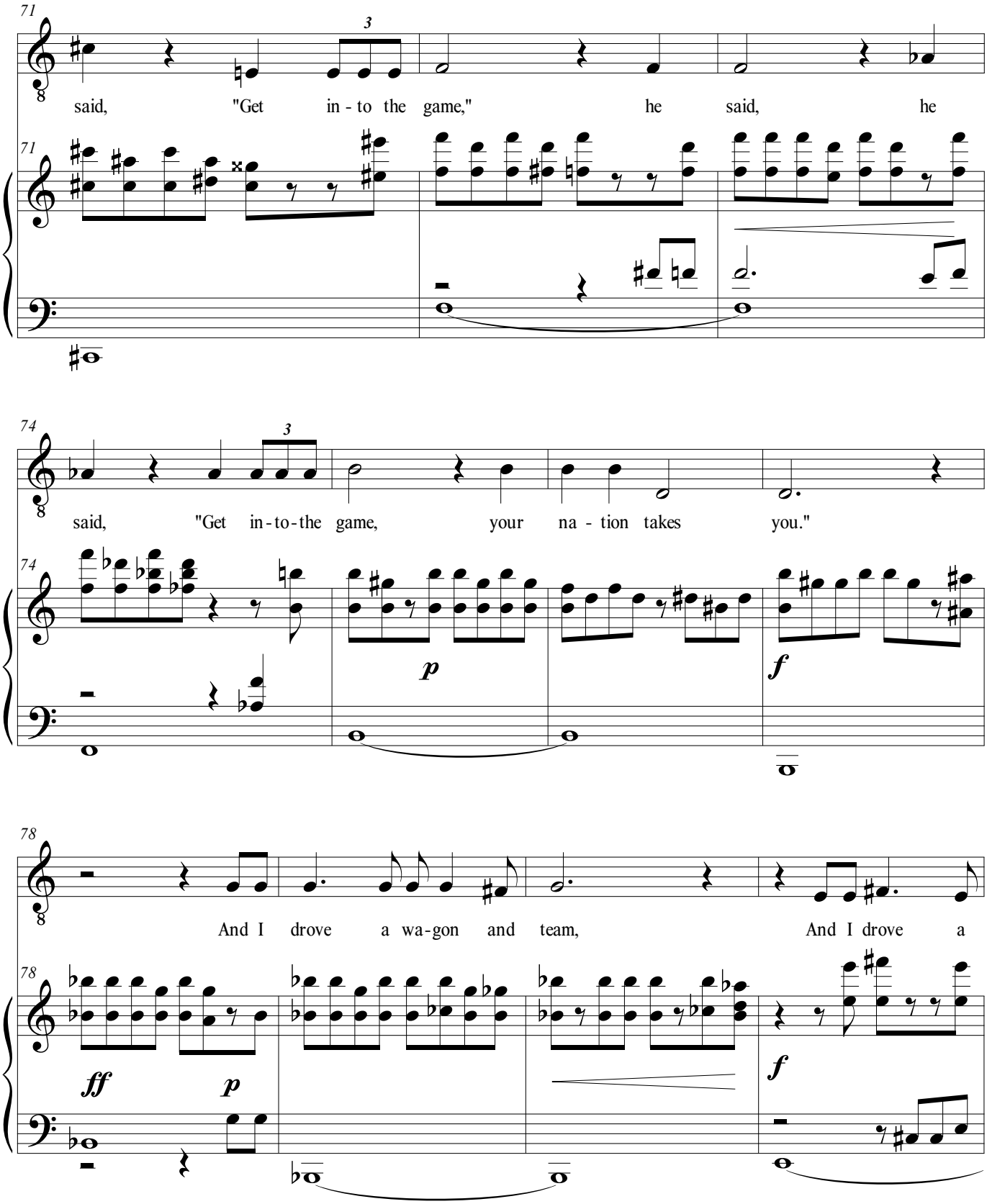

11
On the march of Mil - ti - ades' pha - lanx I had a haft and
pp
ff
pp
14
head; I had a brist - ling gleam - ing spear hand - le.
p
f
18
Red head - ed Cae - sar picked me for a team - ster. He
p
f
ff
p

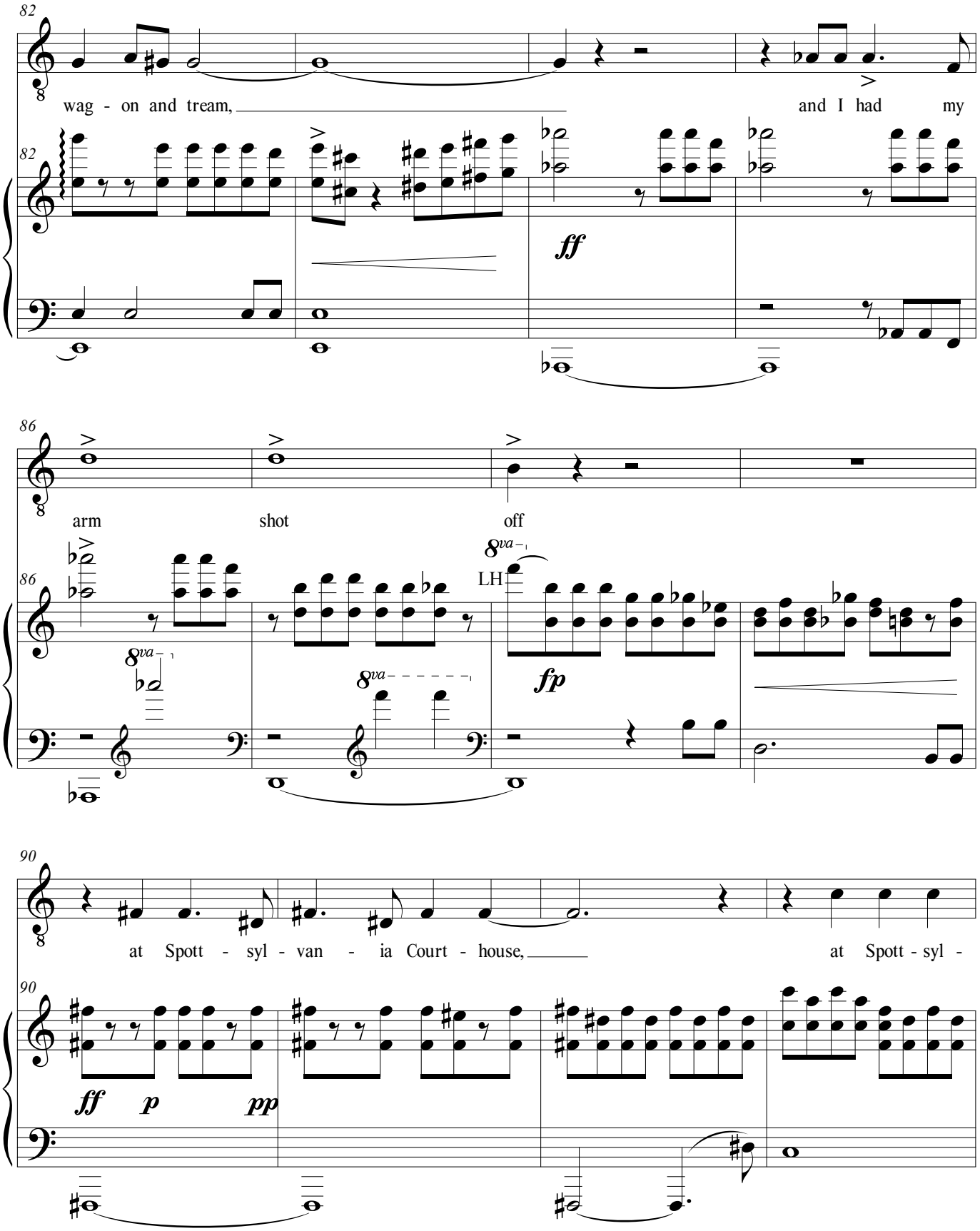

Spoken:
22
said, he said, "Go to work you Tus-can bas-tard, Rome calls for a
ff
f
26
man who can drive hor - ses,
ff
30
a man who can drive hor - ses.
p
ff
p
pp

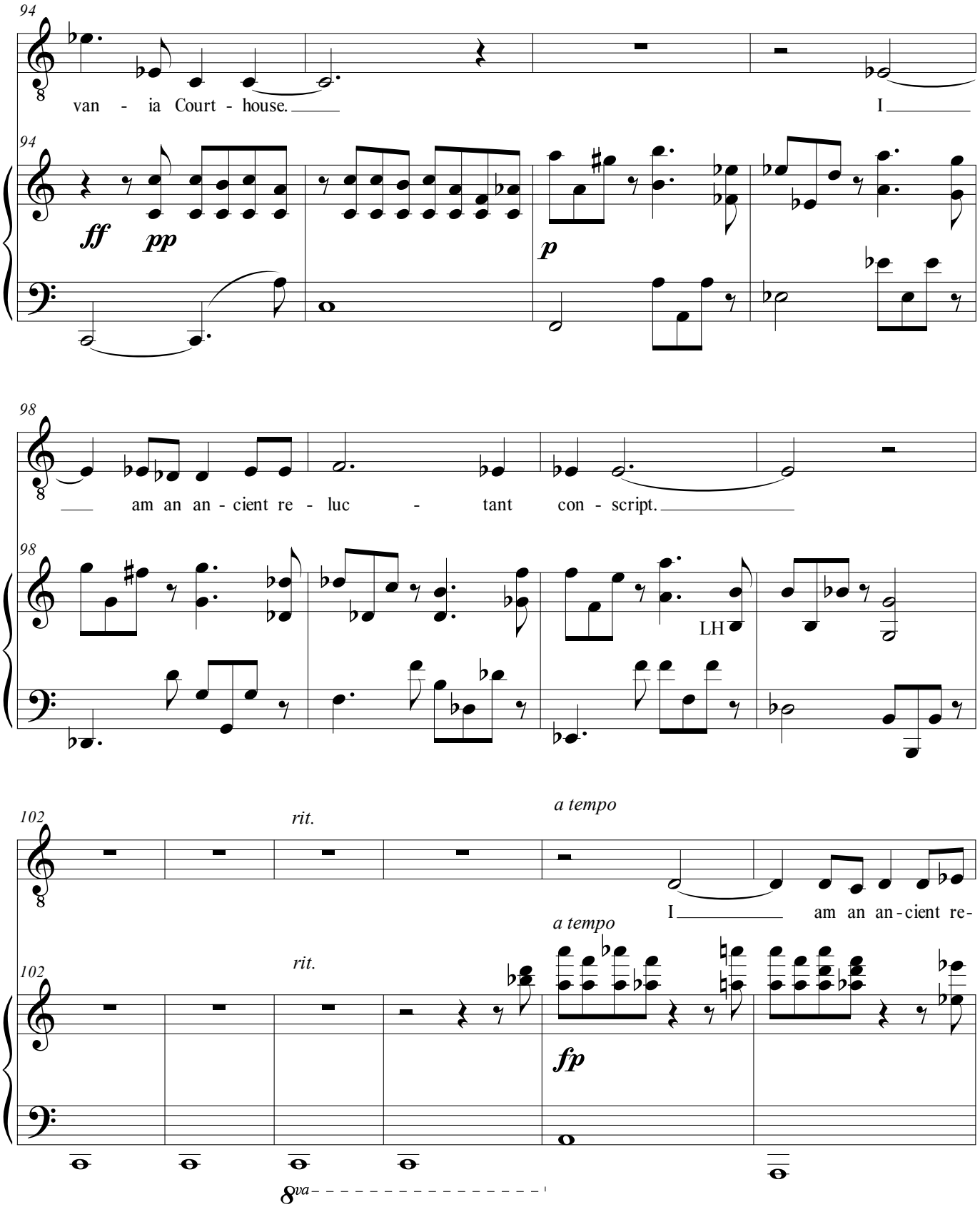

34
The u-nits of con-quest led by Charles the Twelfth, They
ff pp
38
saw me. The
p
8va
Ped.
42
whirl - ling whim - si-cal Na-po-le - on - ic co - lumns,

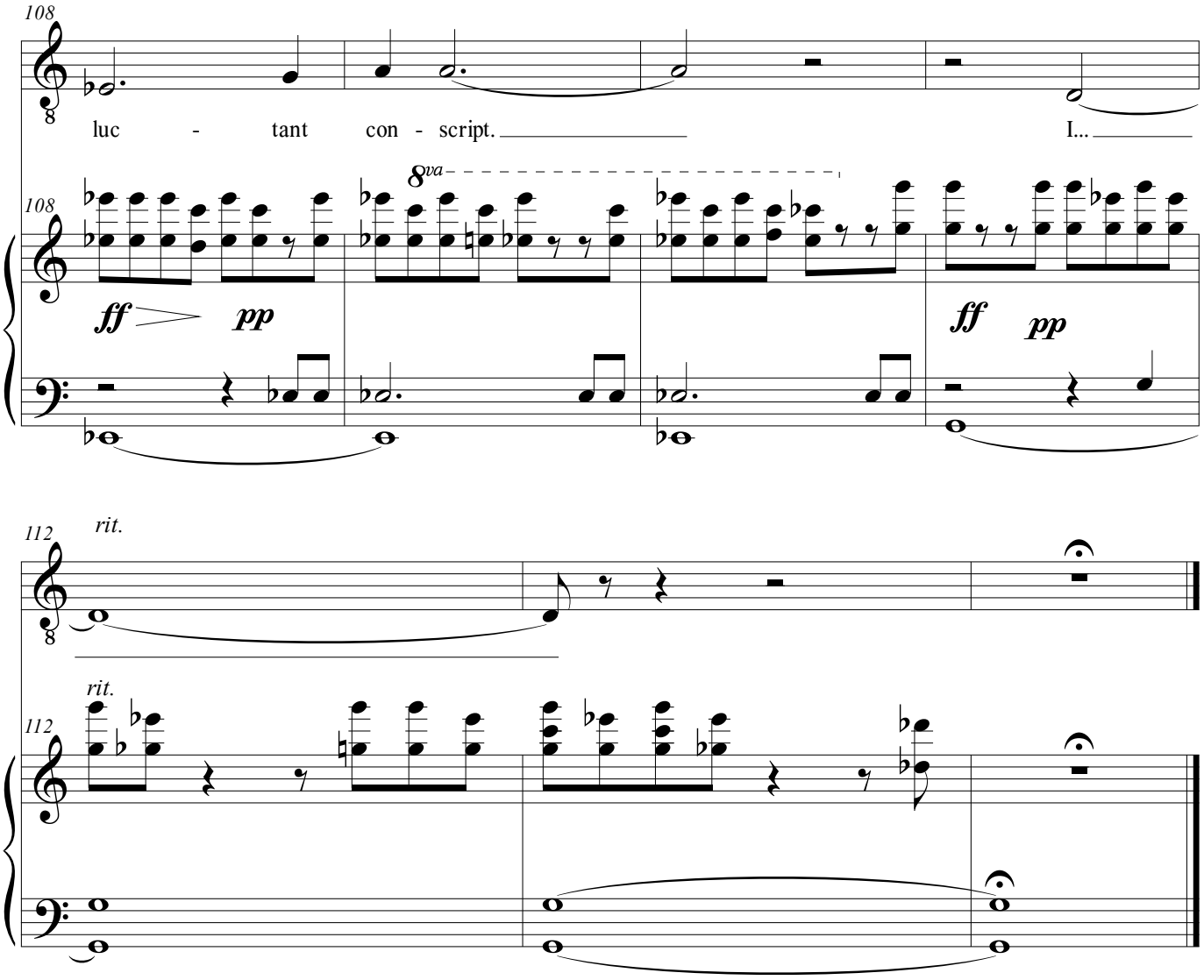

46
ff
They saw me.
They saw me.
46
fff
8va
52
They saw me as one of the
52
p
56
horse - shoers.
56


60
I trimmed the feet of a white horse
ff
pp
f
64
Bo - na - parte swept the night stars
ff
68
with.
Lin - coln
pp


71
said, "Get in - to the game," he said, he
74
said, "Get in-to-the game, your na - tion takes you."
78
And I drove a wa-gon and team, And I drove a
ff
p
p
f
f


82
wag - on and tream,
and I had my
ff
86
arm
shot
off
LH
8va
fp
90
at Spott - syl - van - ia Court - house,
at Spott - syl -
ff
p
pp


94
van - ia Court - house.
I
ff
pp
p
98
am an an - cient re - luc - tant con - script.
LH
102
rit.
a tempo
I am an an - cient re -
fp
8va


108
luc - tant con - script.
I...
8va
108
ff
pp
ff
pp
112
rit.
rit.
112

To Waken an Old Lady

High Voice

Old age is
a flight of small
cheeping birds
skimming
bare trees
above a snow glaze.
Gaining and failing
they are buffeted
by a dark wind--
But what?
On harsh weedstalks
the flock has rested,
the snow
is covered with broken
seedhusks
and the wind tempered
by a shrill
piping of plenty.

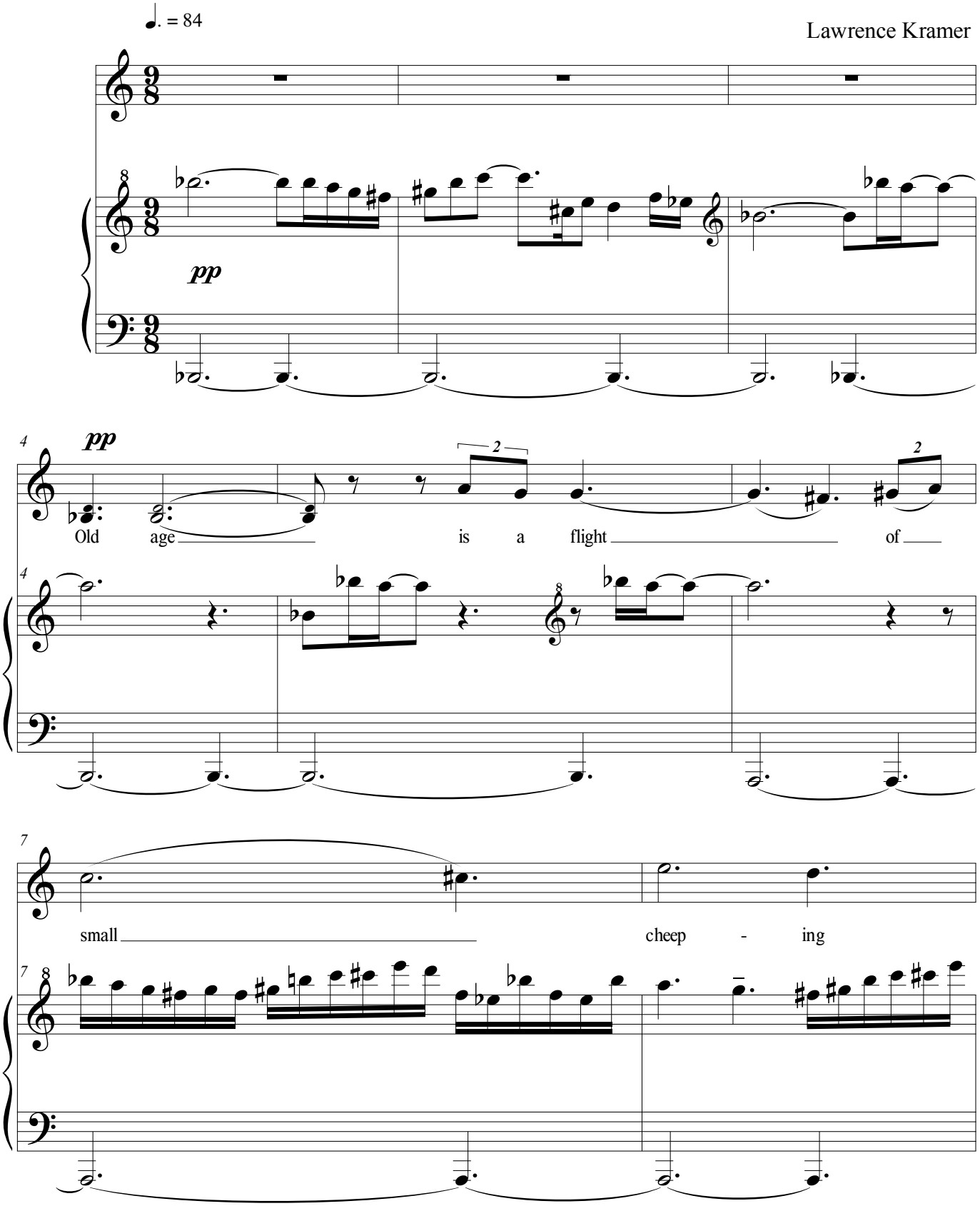
--William Carlos Williams

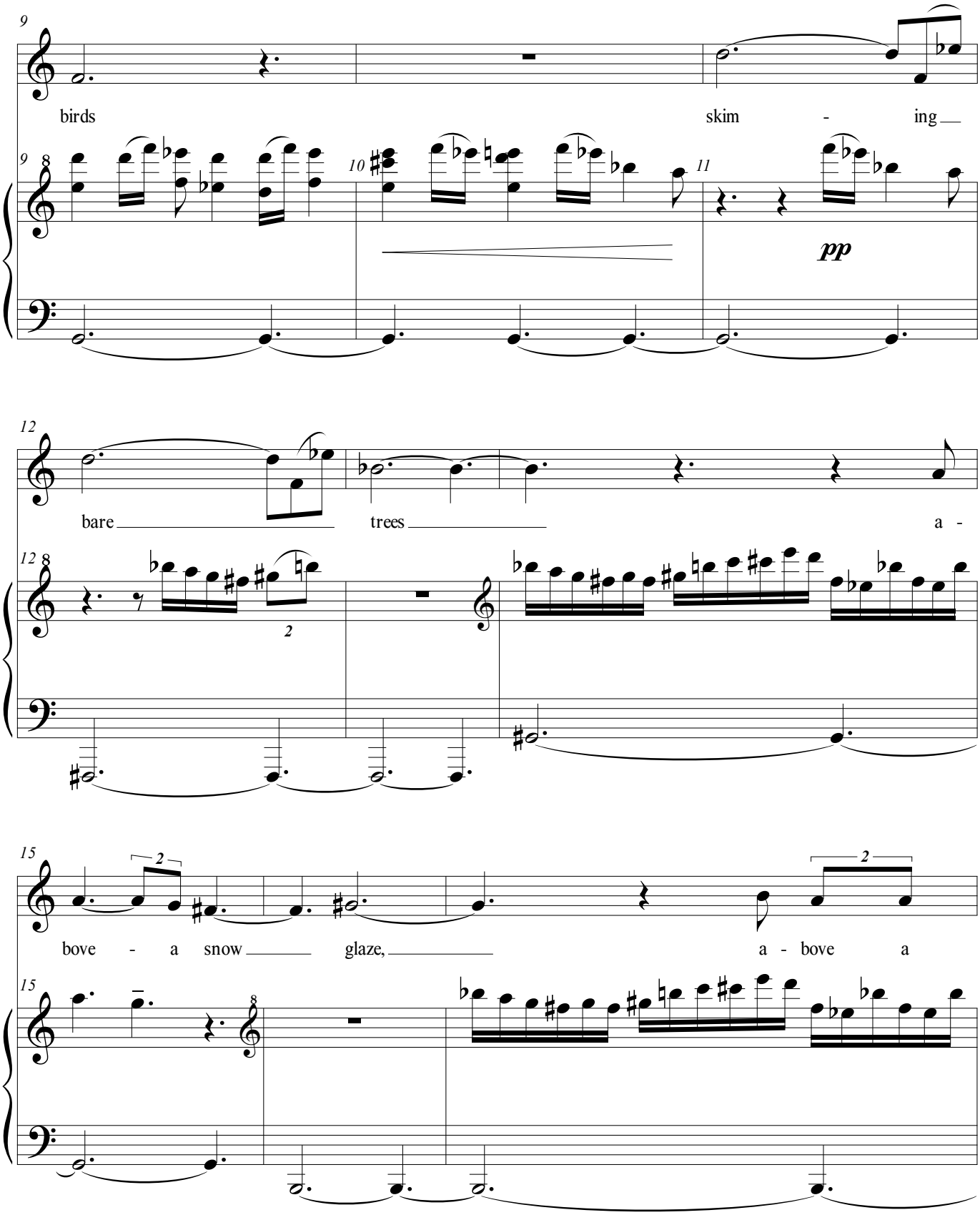
Written Voice Range: B♭3 (with ossias) - G♯5
Tessitura: F4 - D5
Duration 3:15

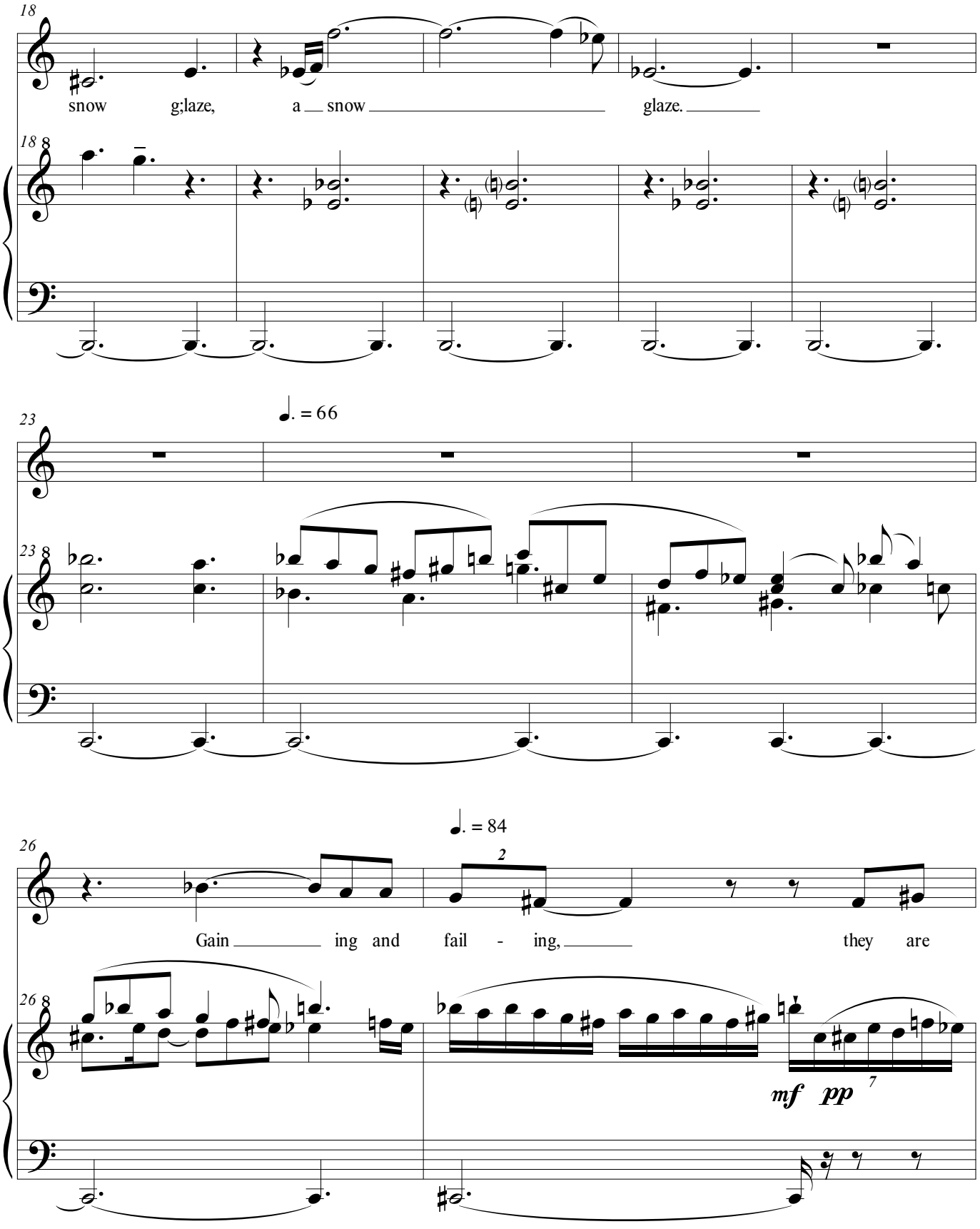
Composed 2020

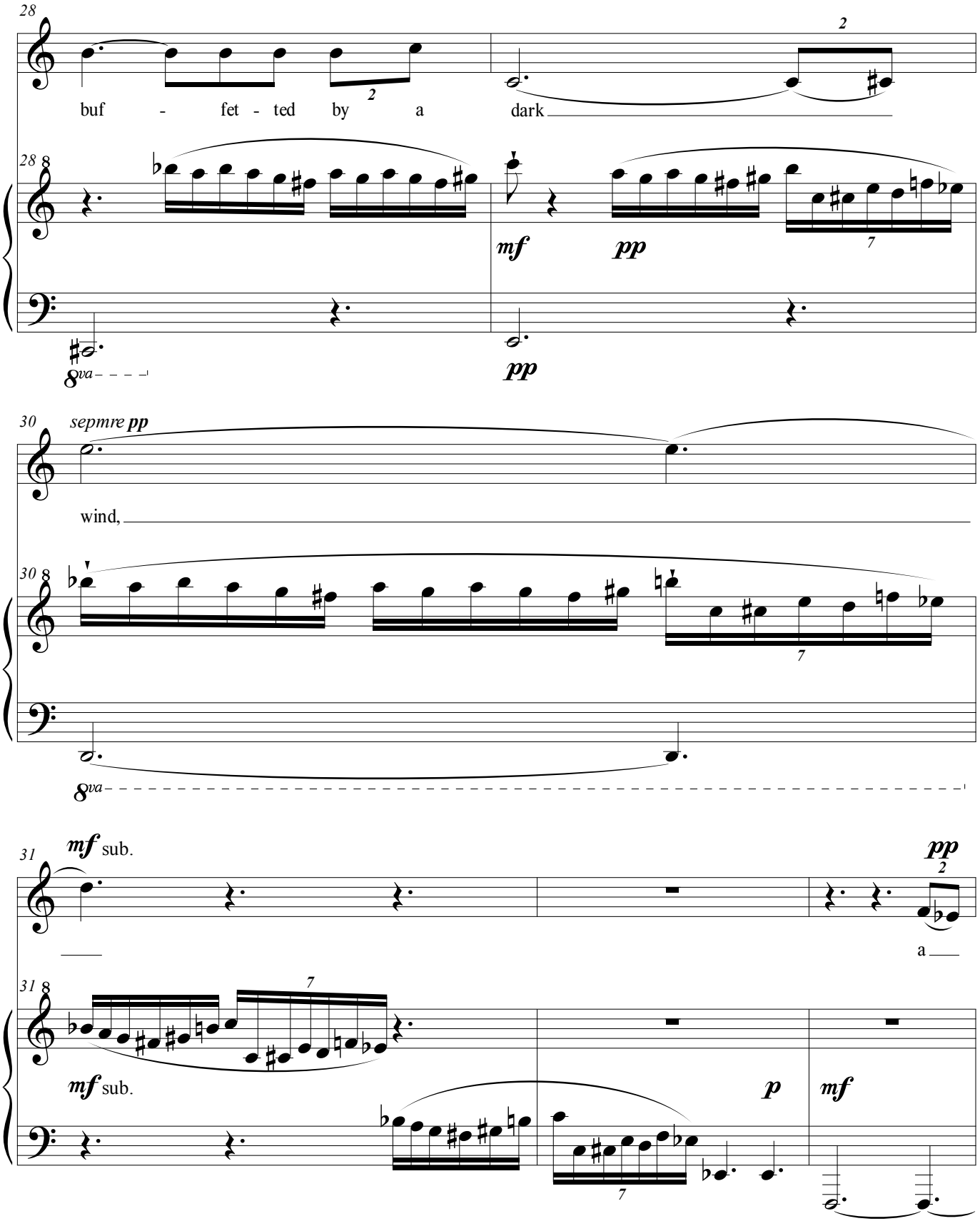
To Waken an Old Lady

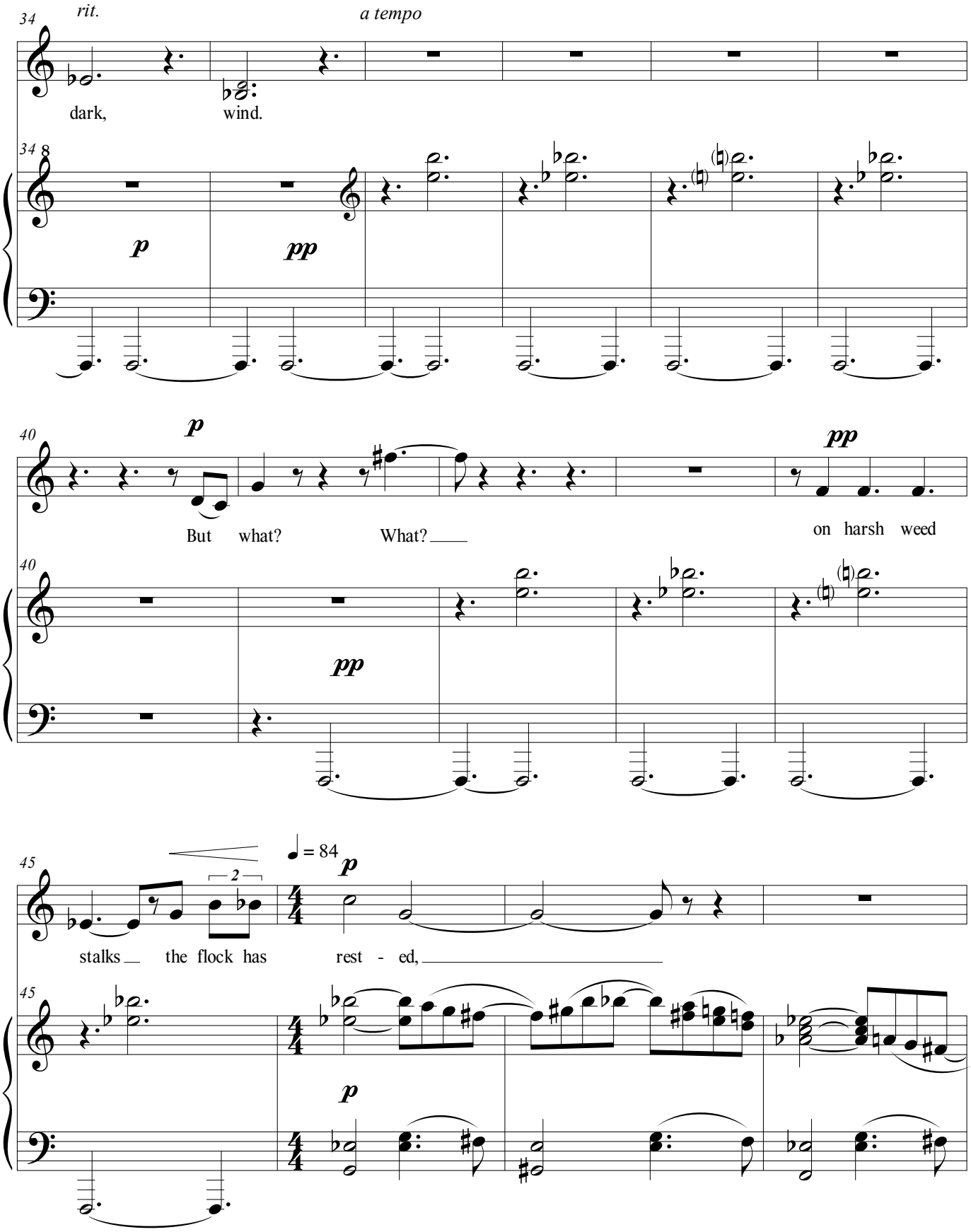
Lawrence Kramer

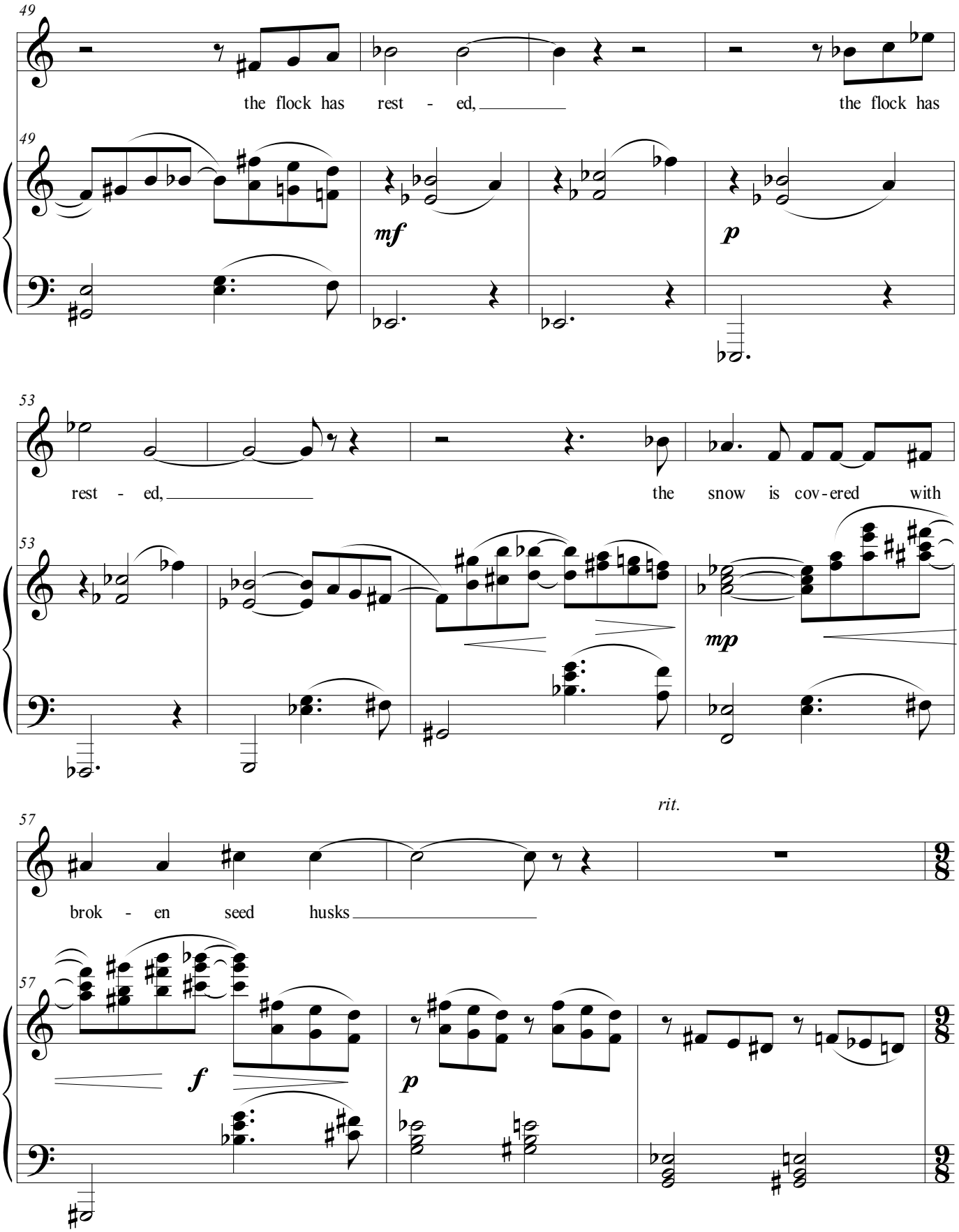


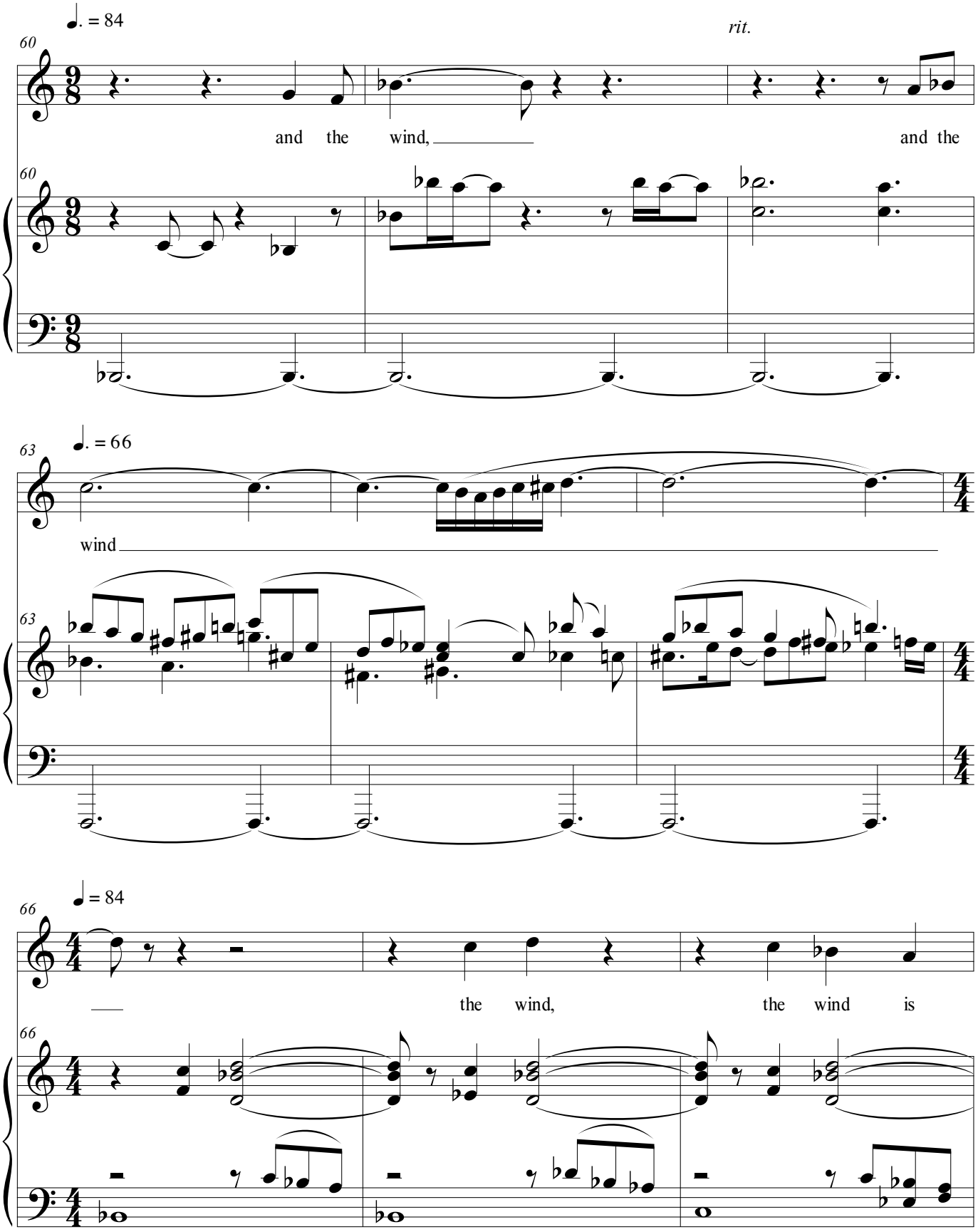

9
birds
skim - ing
10
11
pp
12
bare
trees
a -
15
bove - a snow
glaze,
a - bove a

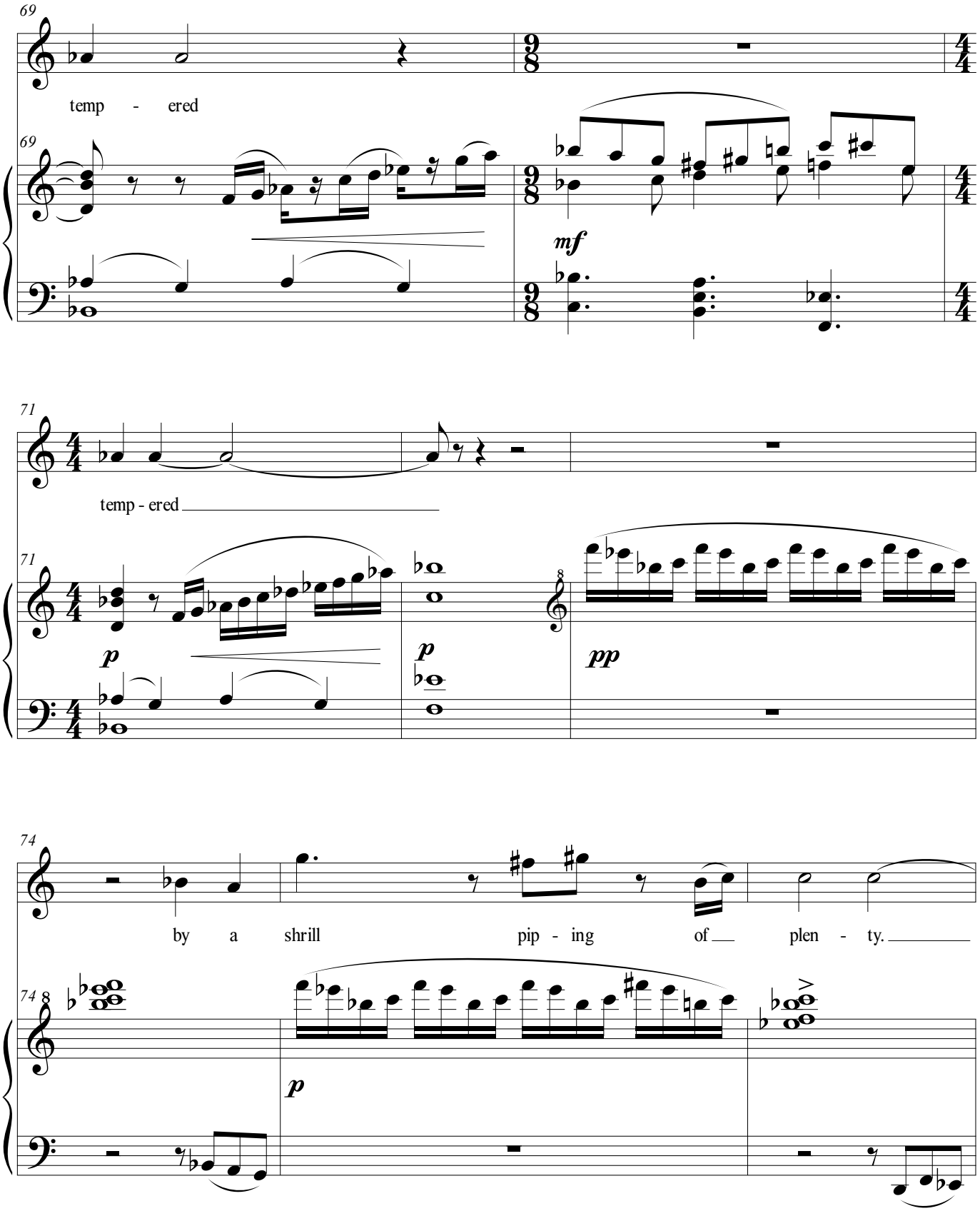

18
snow g;laze, a snow glaze.
18 8
23
♩. = 66
23 8
26
♩. = 84
2
Gain ing and fail - ing, they are
26 8
mf pp
7

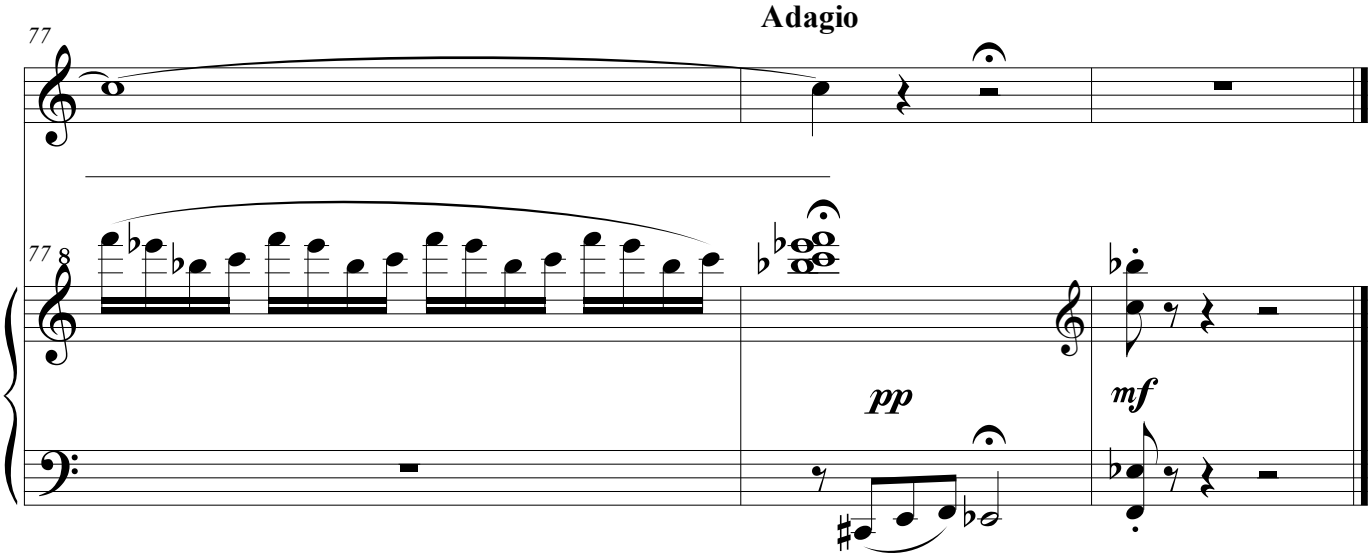

28
buf - fet - ted by a dark
mf
pp
8va
pp
30
sepmre pp
wind,
8va
31
mf sub.
pp
a
mf sub.
p
mf


34
rit.
a tempo
dark,
wind.
34
8
p
pp
40
p
pp
But what? What?
on harsh weed
40
pp
45
2
♩ = 84
p
stalks the flock has rest - ed,
45
p


49
the flock has rest - ed, the flock has
mf
p
53
rest - ed, the snow is cov-ered with
mp
rit.
57
brok - en seed husks
f
p


♩. = 84
60
rit.
and the wind, and the
♩. = 66
63
wind
♩ = 84
66
the wind, the wind is


69
temp - ered
69
mf
71
temp - ered
71
p
p
8
pp
74
by a shrill pip - ing of plen - ty.
74 8
p


Adagio
77
77
8
pp
mf

War

High Voice

When I was a child, certain skies refined my vision: all their characters nuanced my visage. The Phenomena roused up. Now the eternal inflection of moments and the infinity of mathematics thrust me out into the world, where I suffer every civil success, respected by strange childhood and tremedous affections. – I dream of a War of right or of might, of a logic unforeseen.

It is as simple as phrase of music.

Enfant, certains ciels ont affiné mon optique : tous les caractères nuancèrent ma physionomie. Les Phénomènes s'émurent. - À présent, l'inflexion éternelle des moments et l'infini des mathématiques me chassent par ce monde où je subis tous les succès civils, respecté de l'enfance étrange et des affections énormes. - Je songe à une Guerre de droit ou de force, de logique bien imprévue.

C'est aussi simple qu'une phrase musicale.

--Arthur Rimbaud

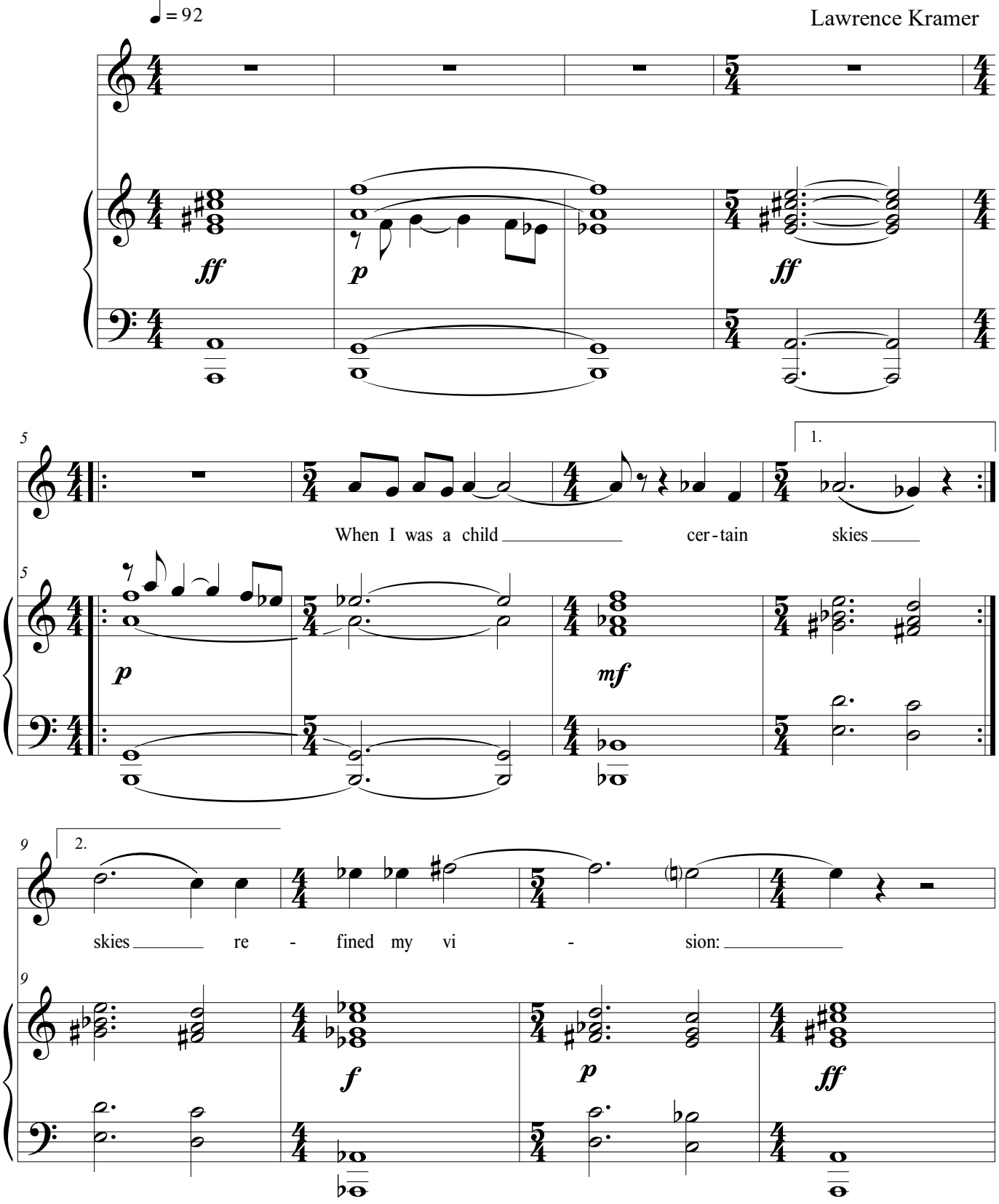
Translation by the composer.

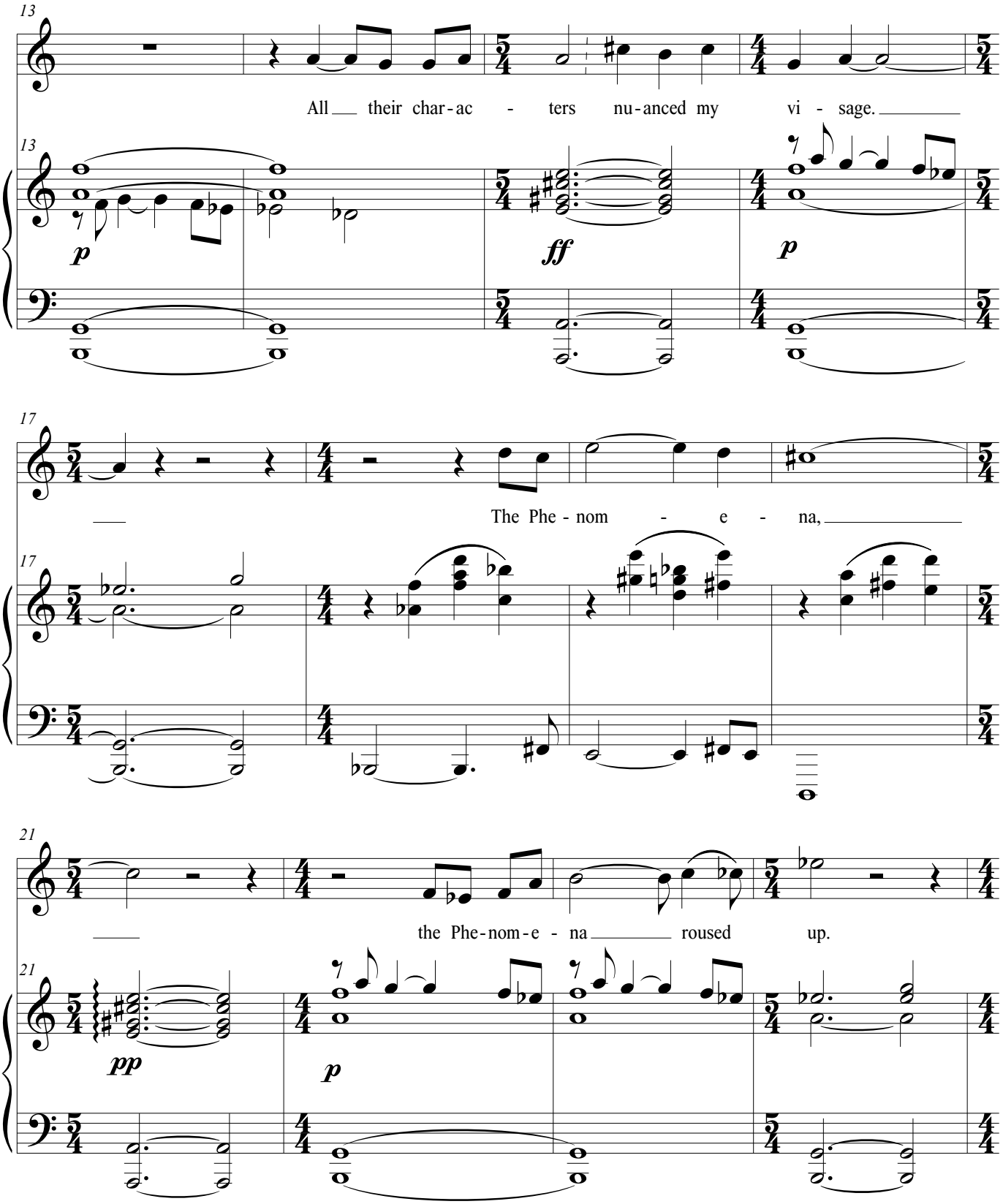
Written Voice Range: E♭4 - G5
Tessitutra: G4 - E5
Duration 3:40

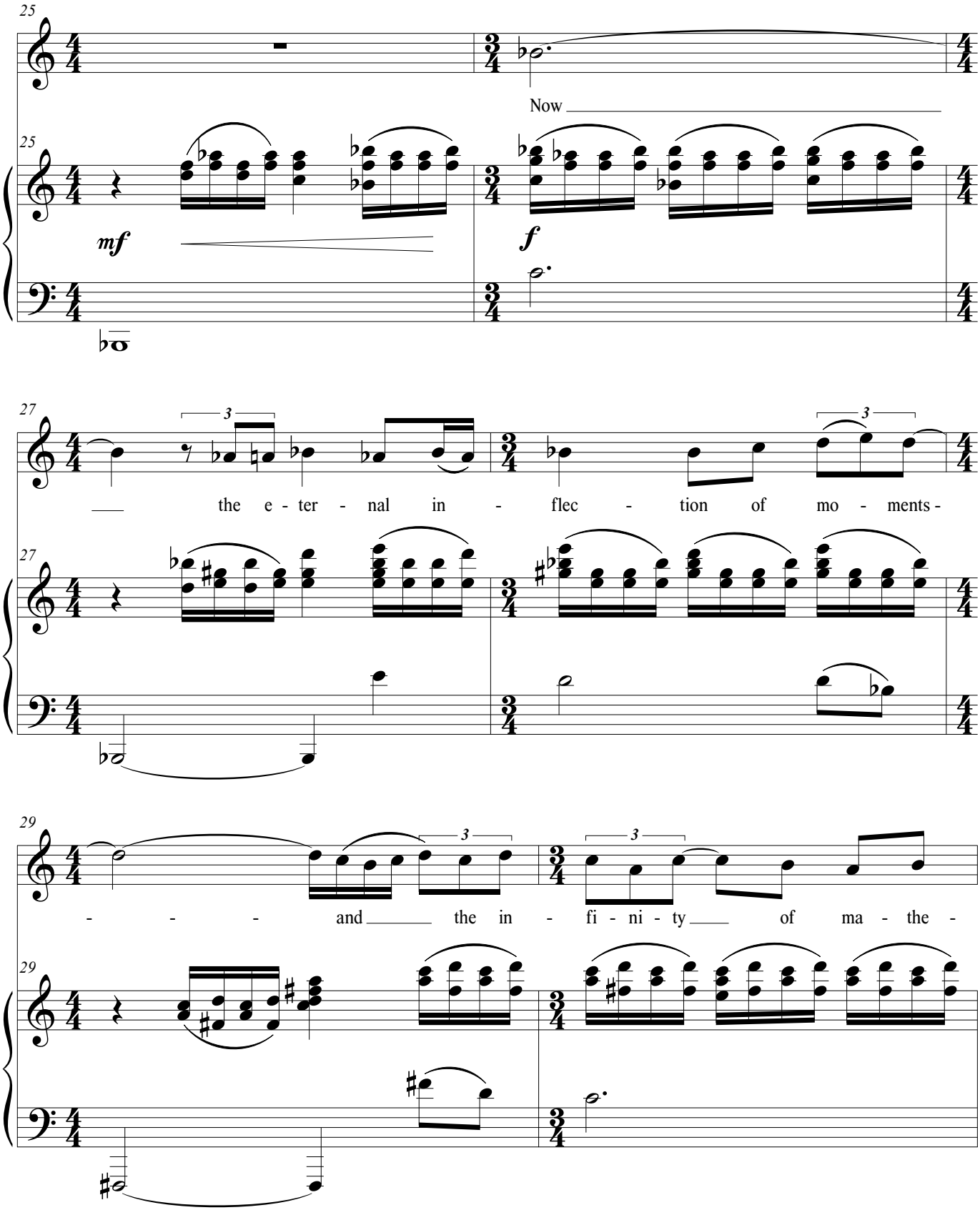
Composed 2019

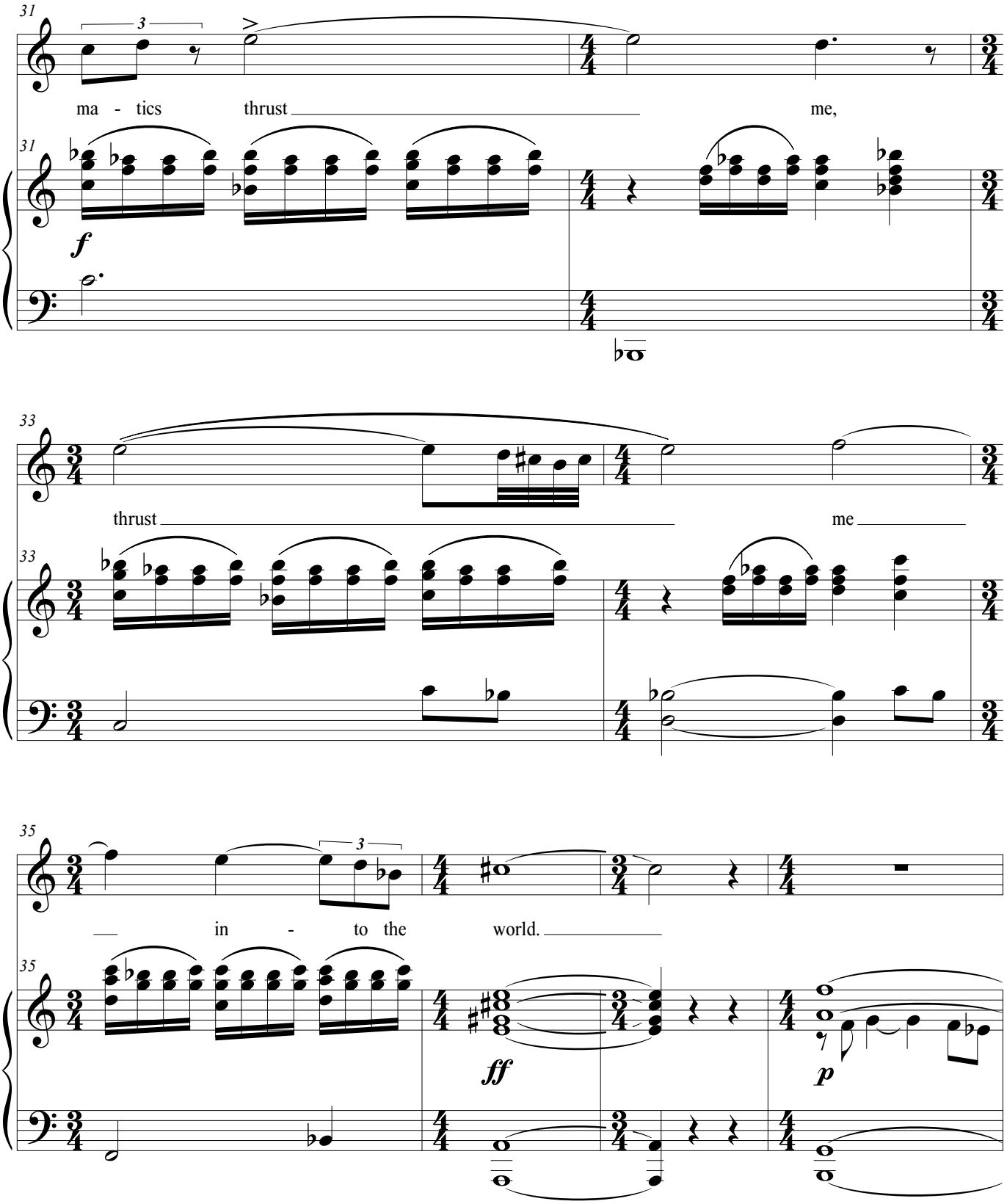
War

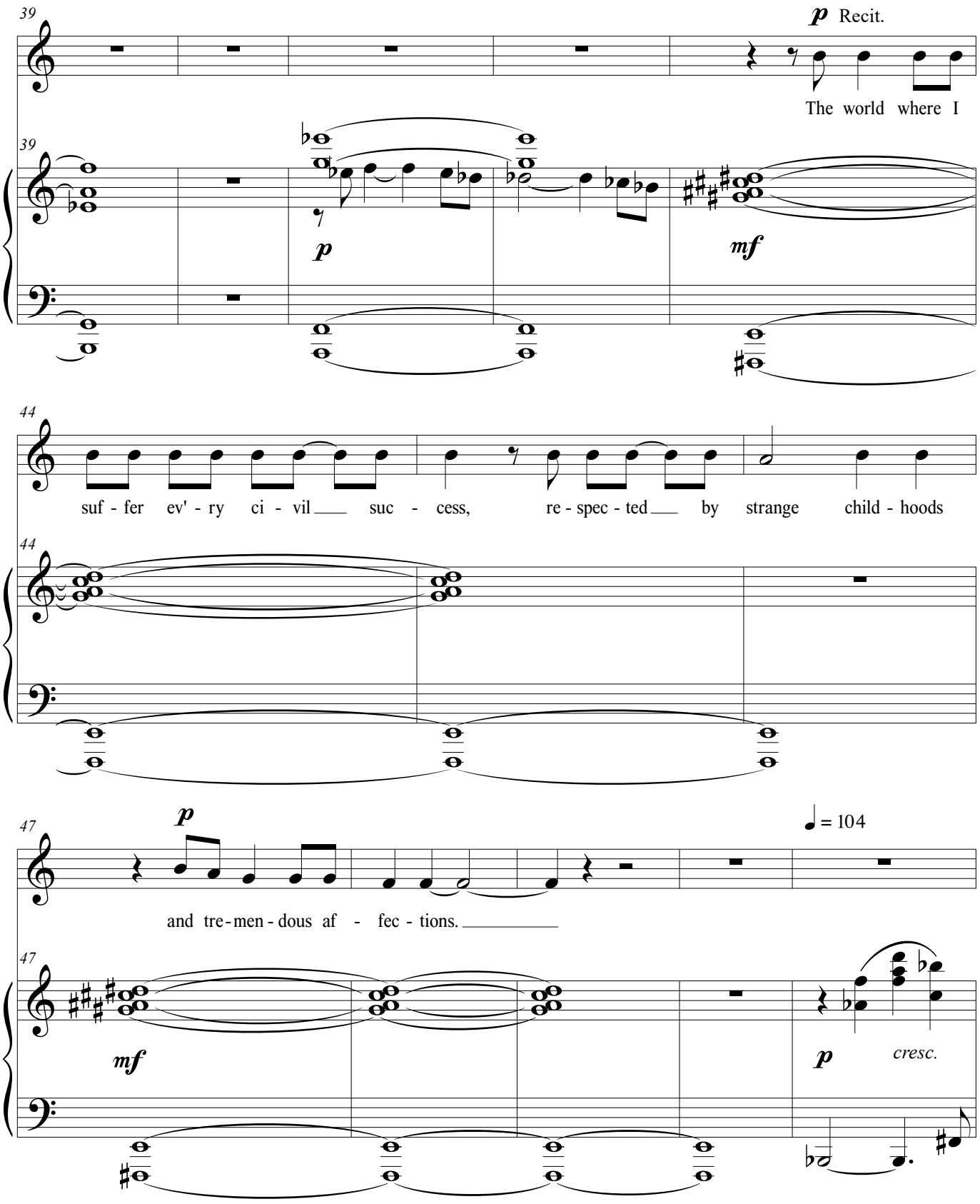
Lawrence Kramer

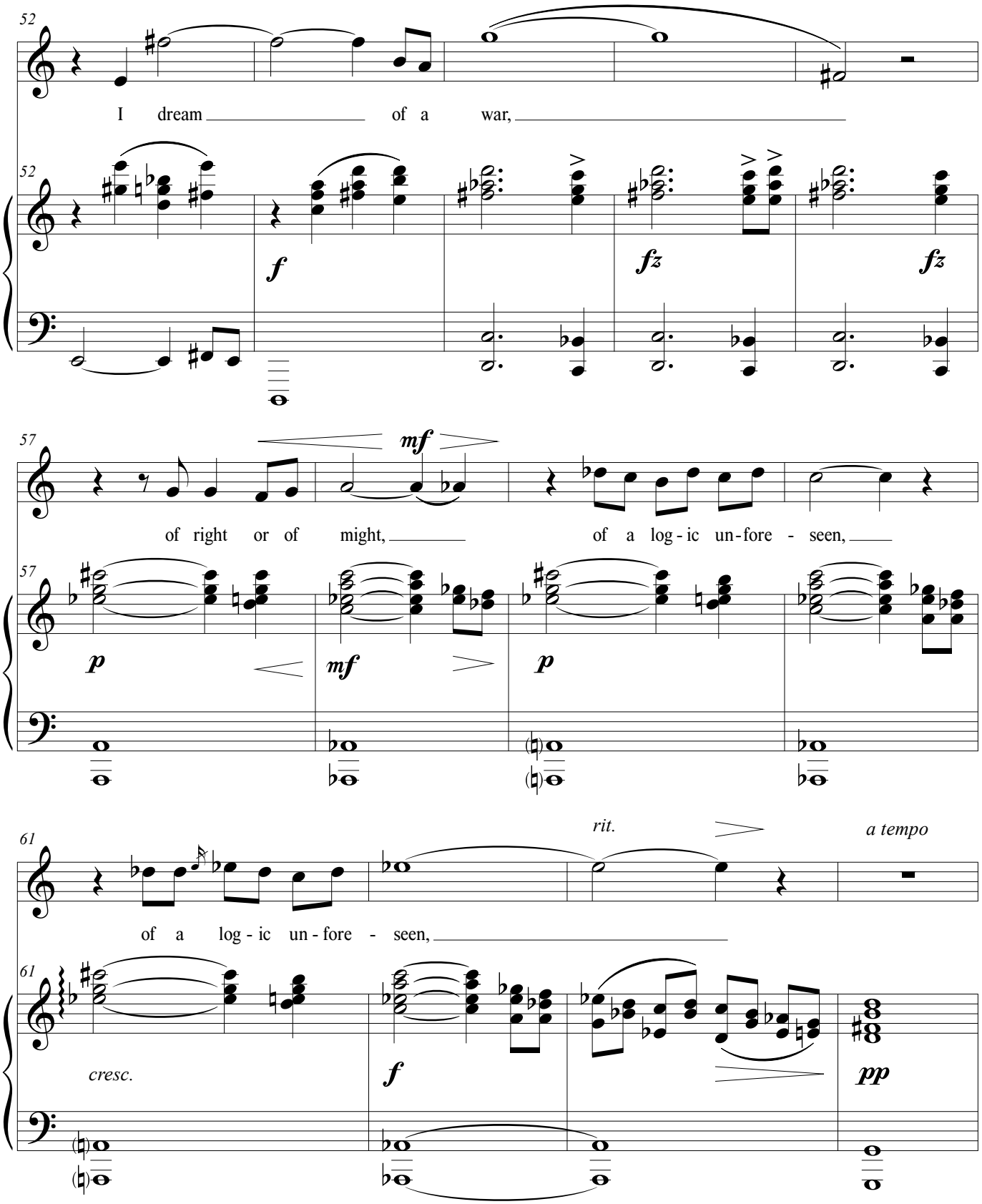


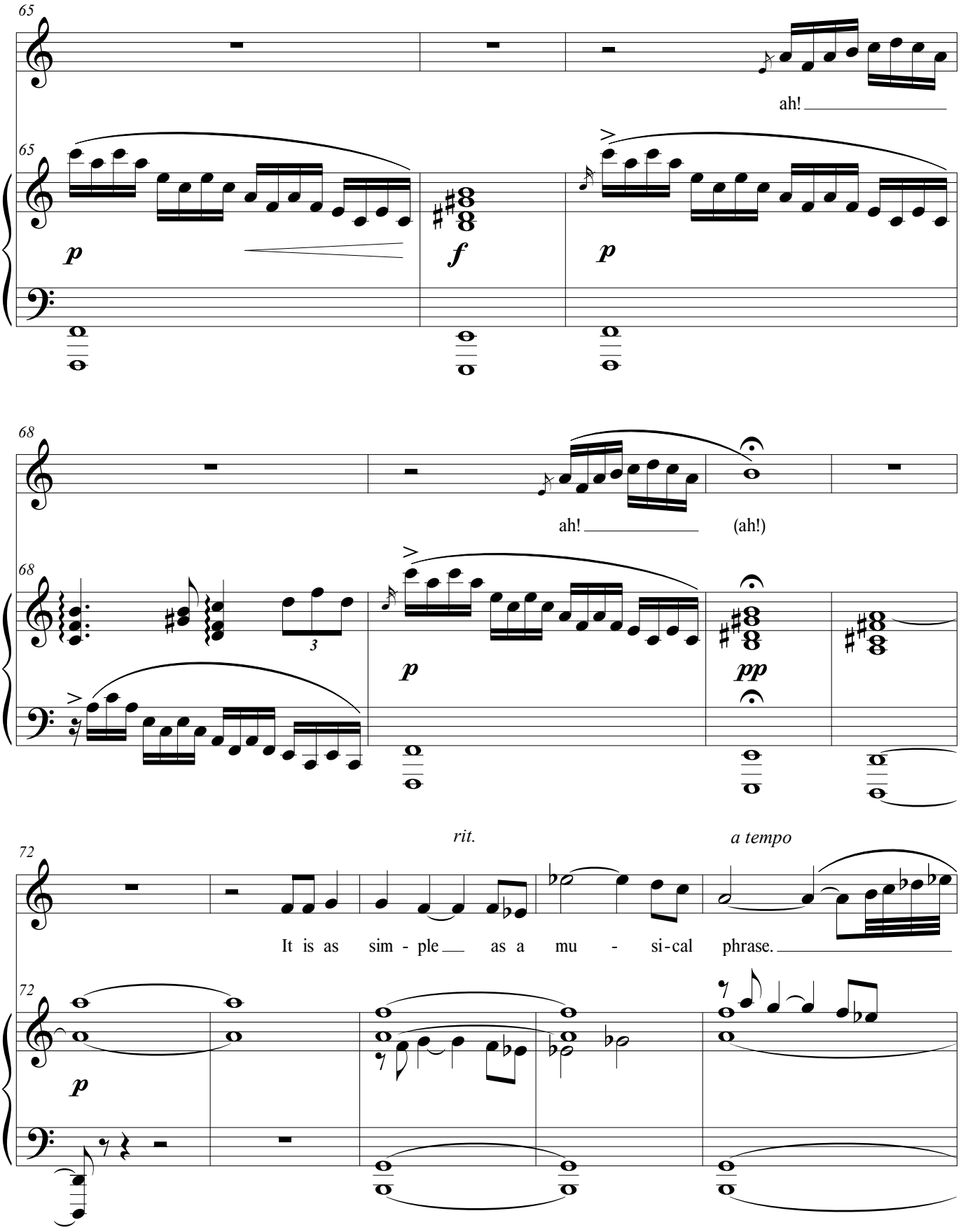

13
All their char-ac - ters nu-anced my vi - sage.
13
p
ff
p
17
The Phe - nom - e - na,
17
21
the Phe-nom-e - na roused up.
21
pp
p

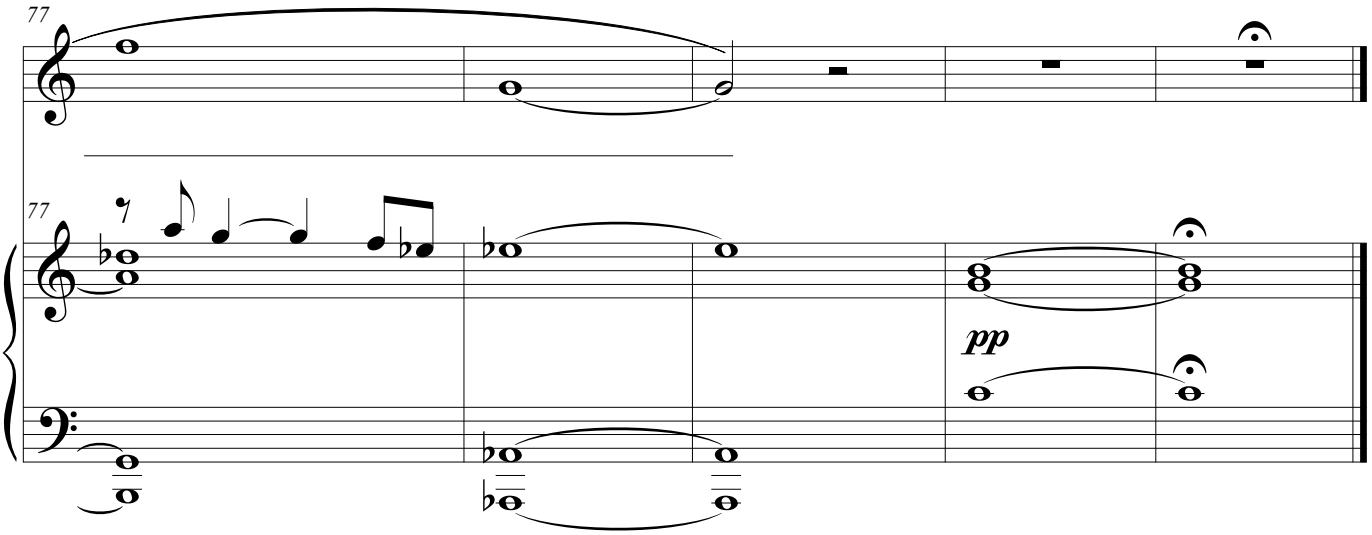

25
Now
mf
f
27
3
the e - ter - nal in - flec - tion of mo - ments -
29
- - - and the in - fi - ni - ty of ma - the -


31
ma - tics thrust me,
f
33
thrust me
35
in - to the world.
ff
p


39
p Recit.
The world where I
39
p
mf
44
suf - fer ev' - ry ci - vil suc - cess, re - spec - ted by strange child - hoods
44
47
p
♩ = 104
and tre - men - dous af - fec - tions.
47
mf
p
cresc.


52
I dream of a war,
52
f
fz
fz
57
mf
of right or of might, of a log - ic un - fore - seen,
57
p
mf
p
61
rit.
a tempo
of a log - ic un - fore - seen,
61
cresc.
f
pp


65
ah!
65
p
f
p
68
ah!
(ah!)
68
3
p
pp
rit.
a tempo
72
It is as sim - ple as a mu - si-cal phrase.
72
p


77
77
pp

Windrose

High Voice

Fresh and rosy red the sun is mounting high,
On floats the sea in distant blue careering through its channels,
On floats the wind over the breast of the sea setting in toward land,
The great steady wind from west or west-by-south,
Floating so buoyant with milk-white foam on the waters.

But I am not the sea nor the red sun,
I am not the wind with girlish laughter,
Not the immense wind which strengthens, not the wind which lashes,
Not the spirit that ever lashes its own body to terror and death,
But I am that which unseen comes and sings, sings, sings,
Which babbles in brooks and scoots in showers on the land,
Which the birds know in the woods mornings and evenings,
And the shore-sands know and the hissing wave.

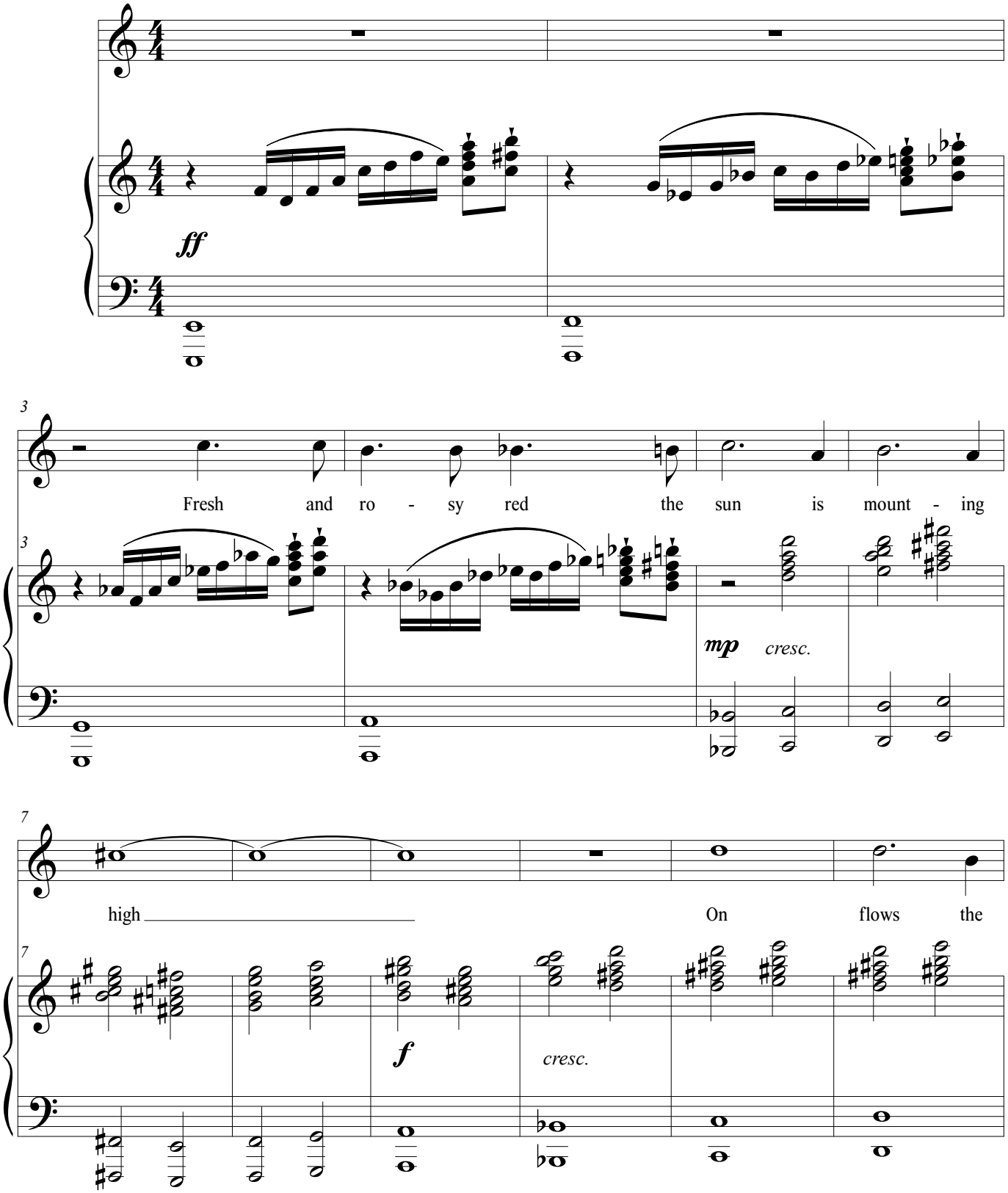
From "Song of the Banner at Daybreak"

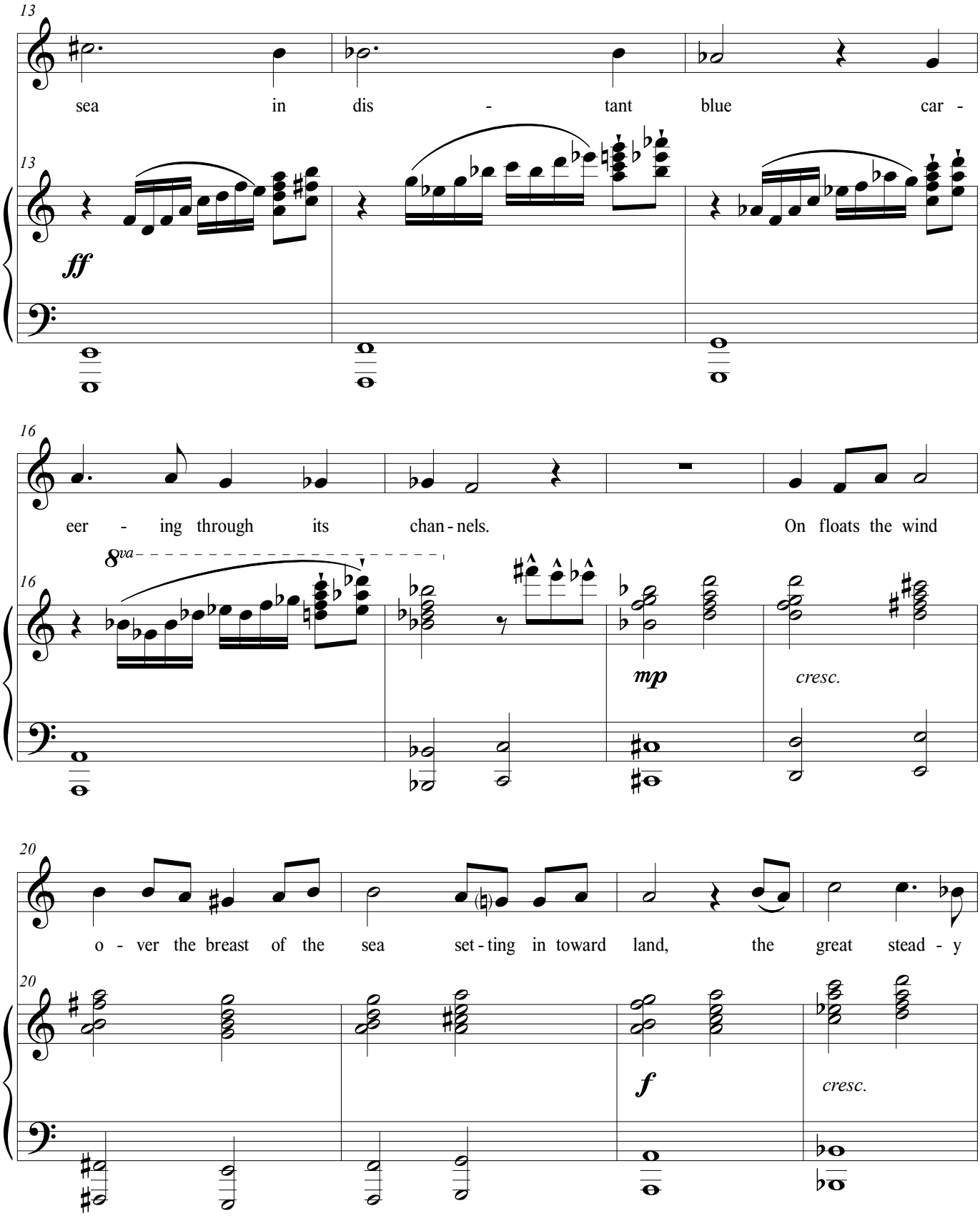
Written voice range: D♭4 - A5
Tessitura: A4 - F5
Duration: 4 minutes

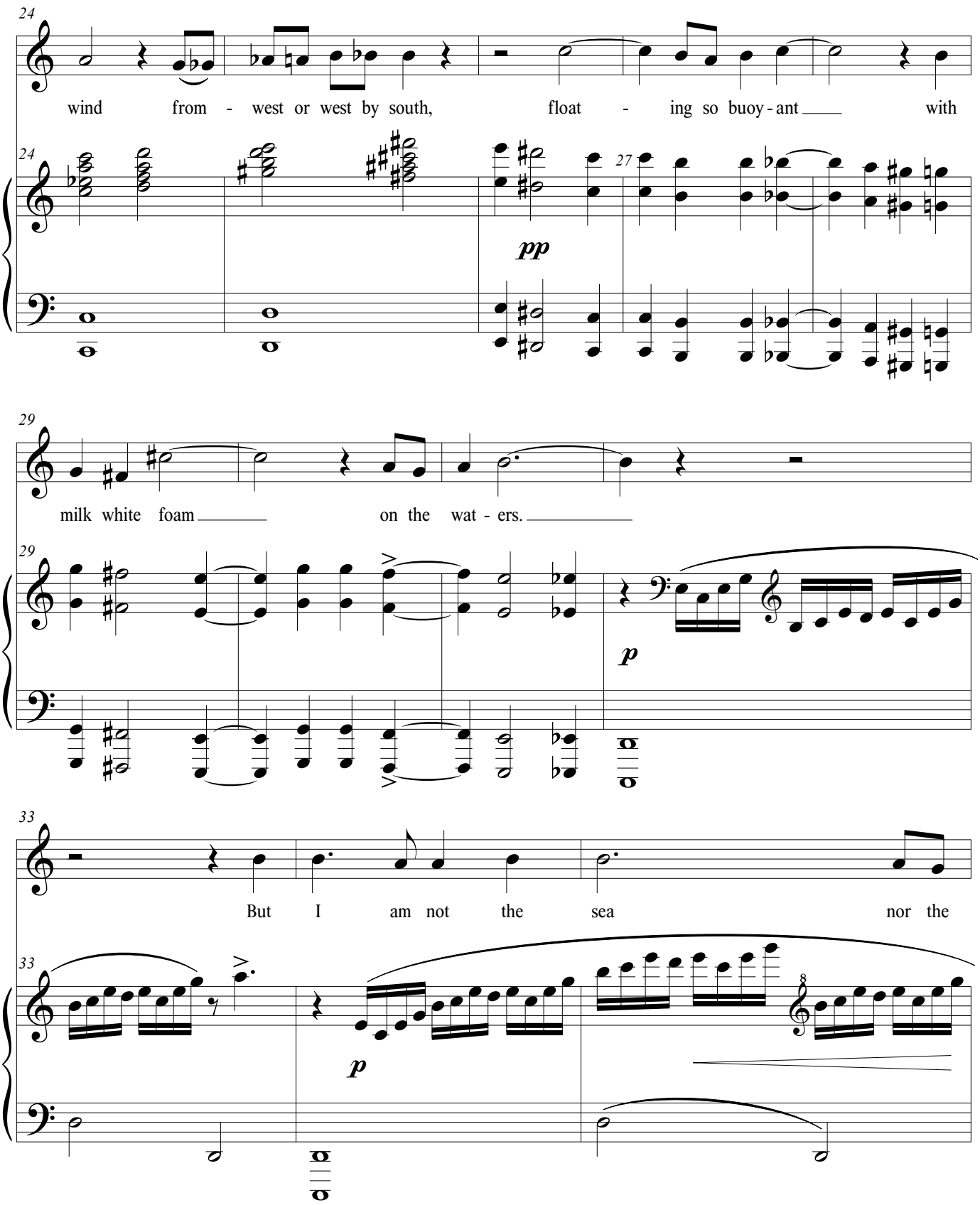
Windrose

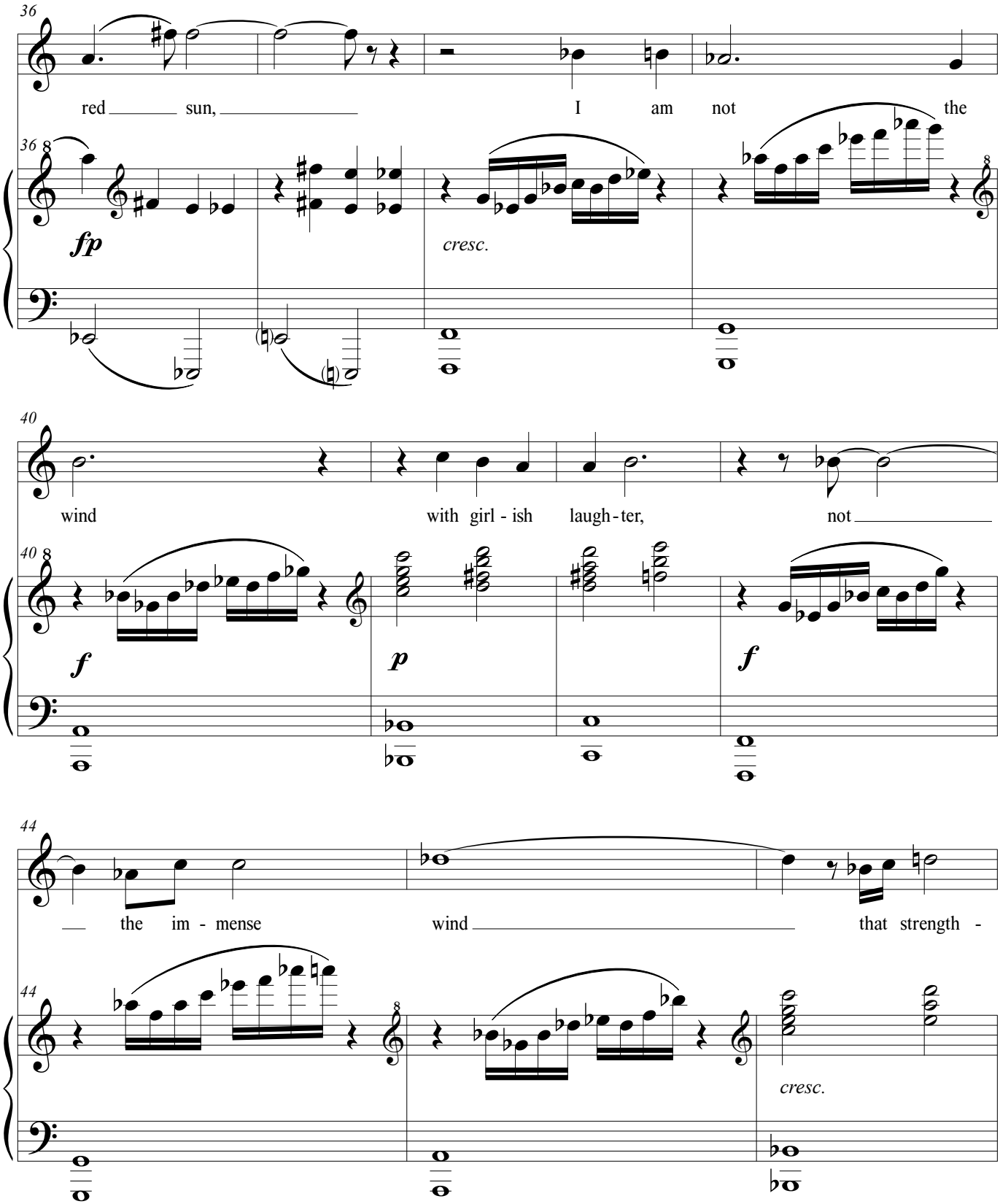
♩ = 126

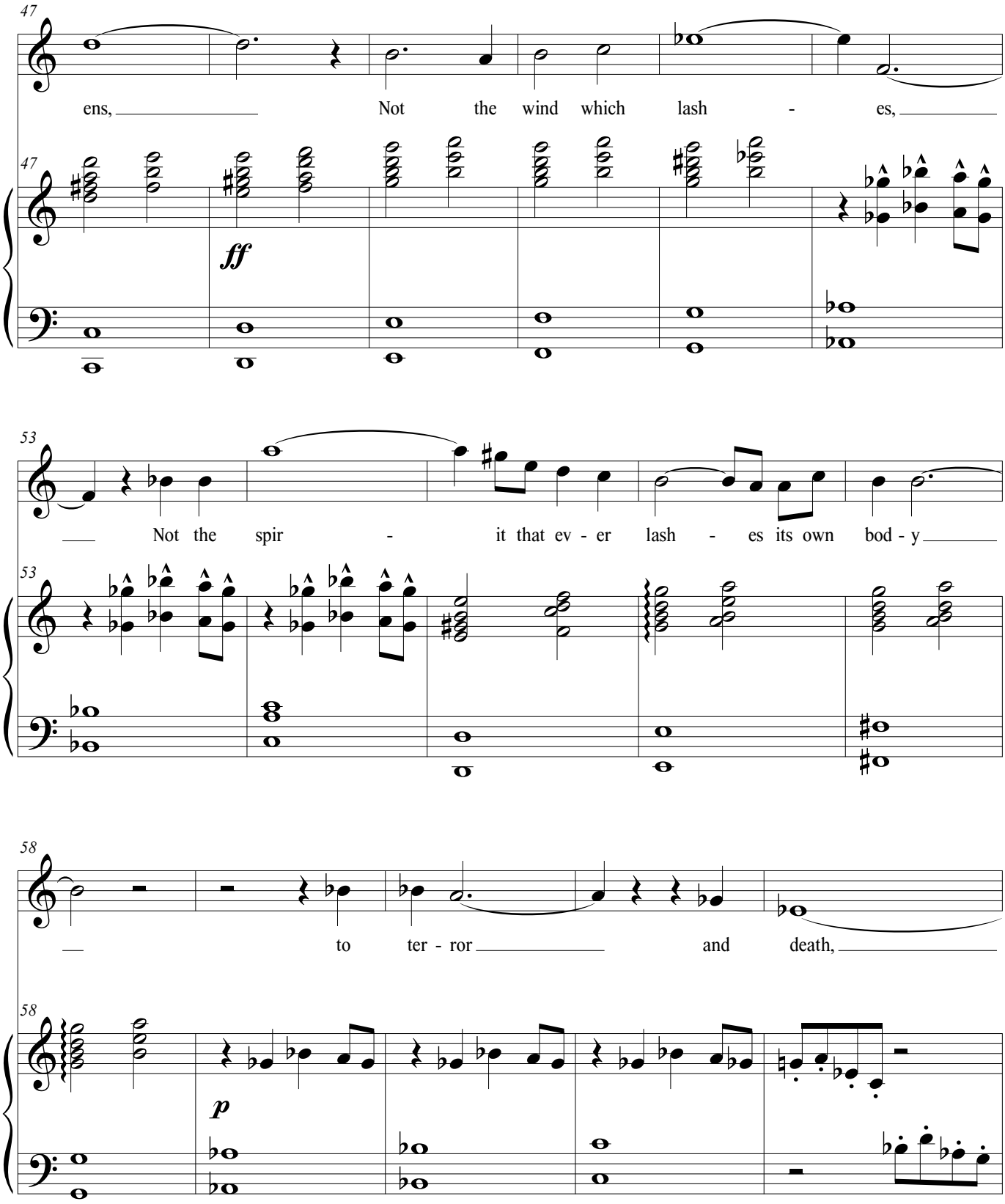
Lawrence Kramer

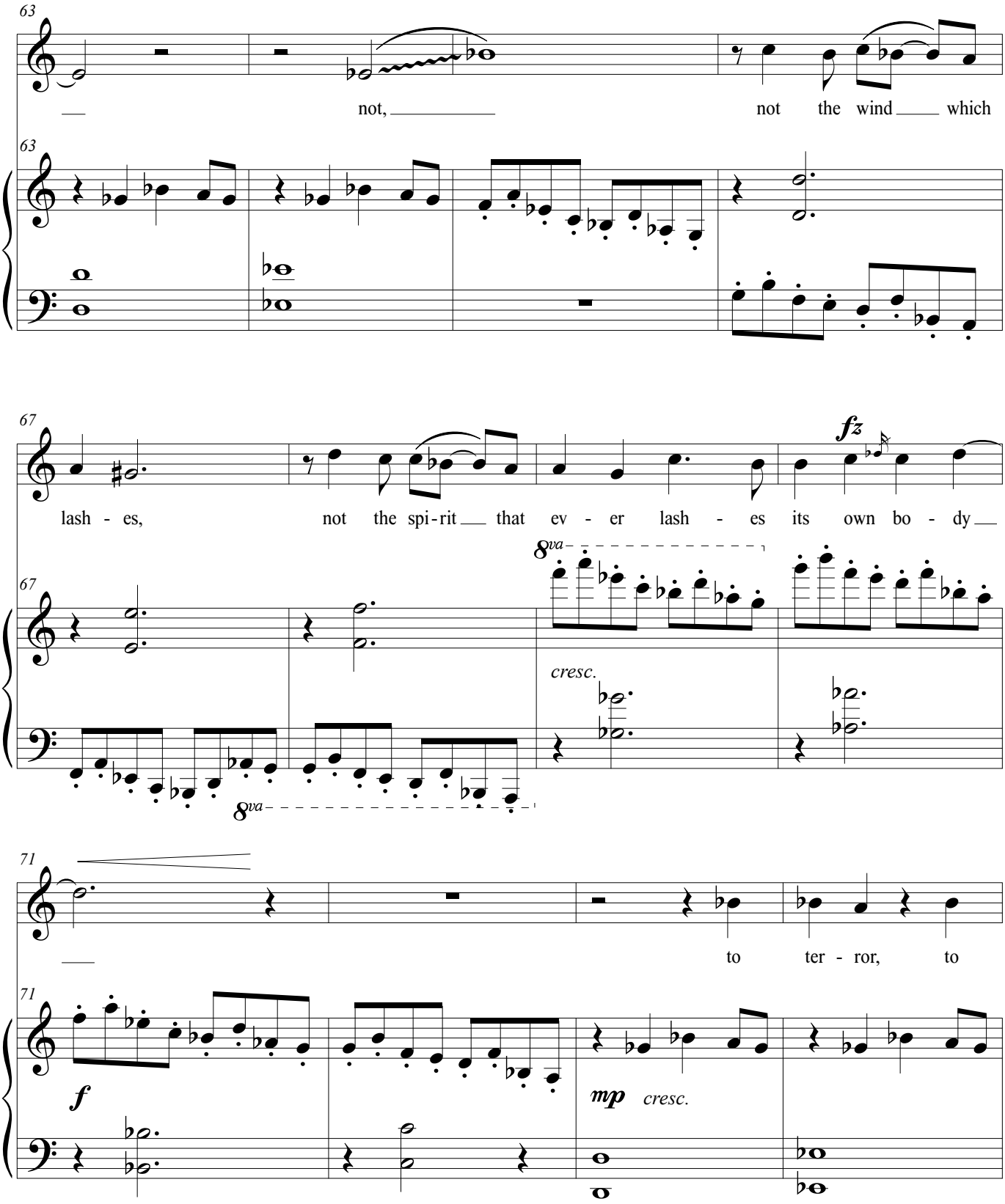


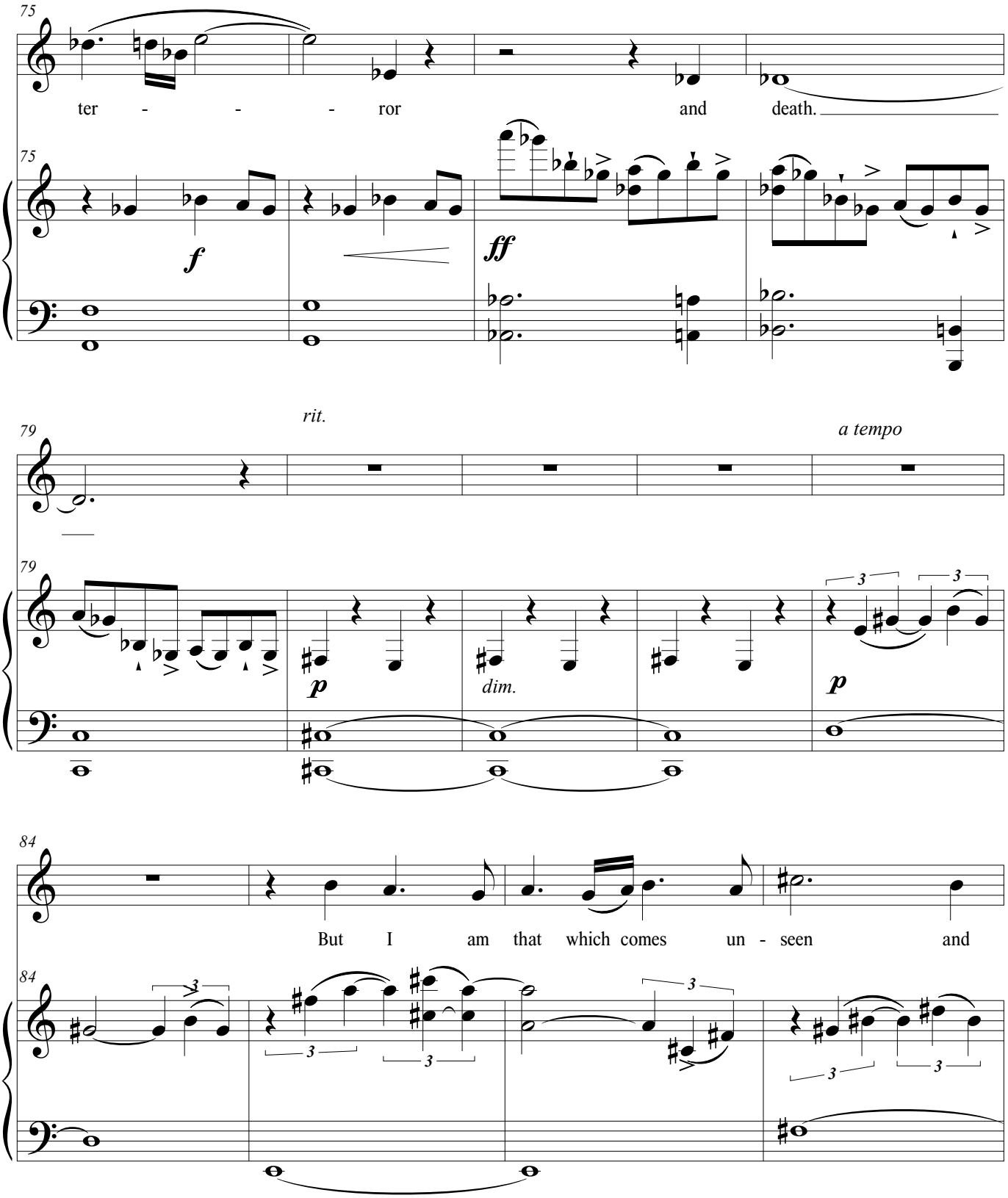

13
sea in dis - tant blue car -
13
ff
16
eer - ing through its chan - nels. On floats the wind
8va
16
mp
cresc.
20
o - ver the breast of the sea set - ting in toward land, the great stead - y
20
f
cresc.

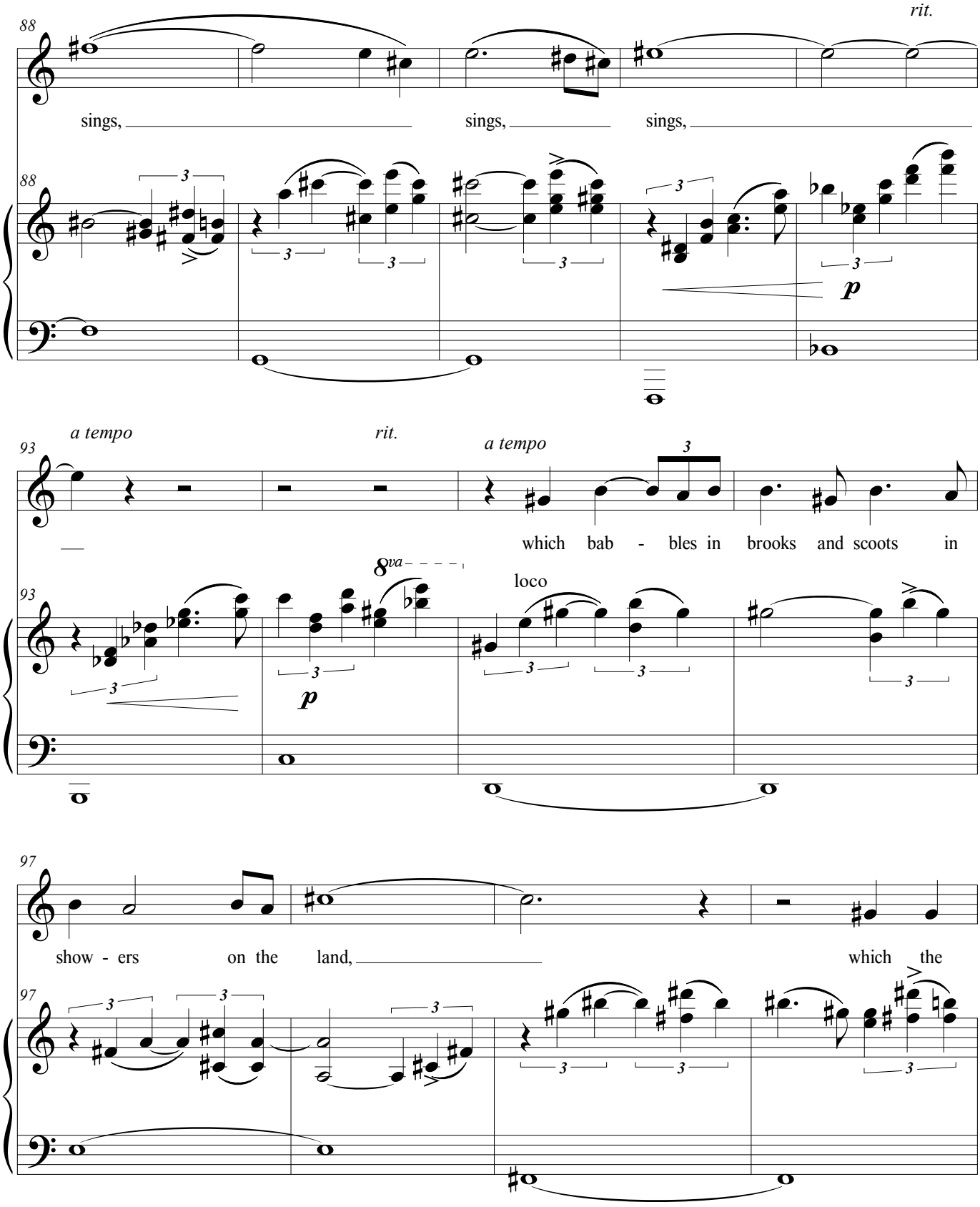

24
wind from - west or west by south, float - ing so buoy - ant with
pp
27
29
milk white foam on the wat - ers.
p
33
But I am not the sea nor the
p
8

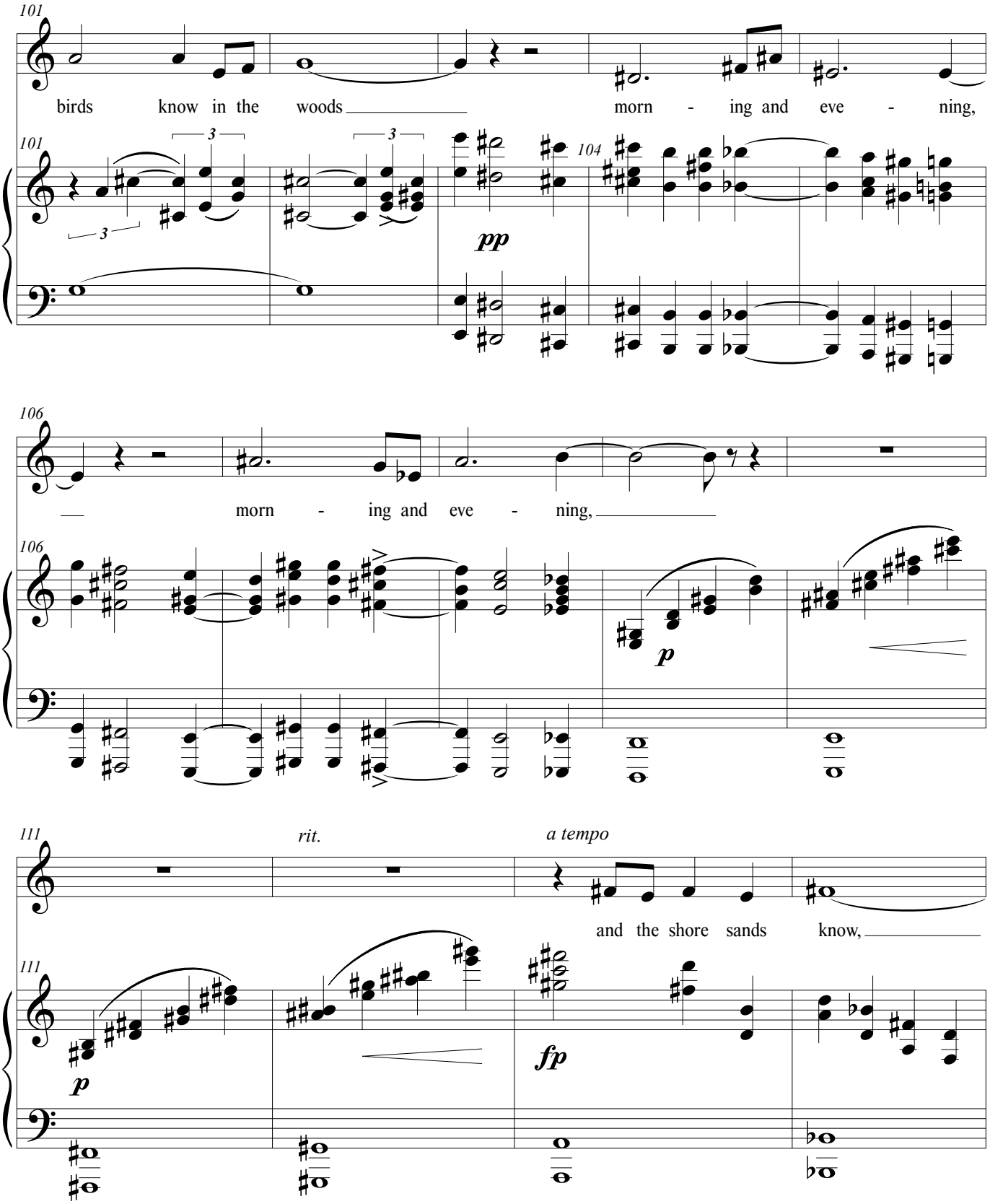

36
red sun, I am not the
fp
cresc.
40
wind with girl - ish laugh - ter, not
f
p
f
44
the im - mense wind that strength -
cresc.

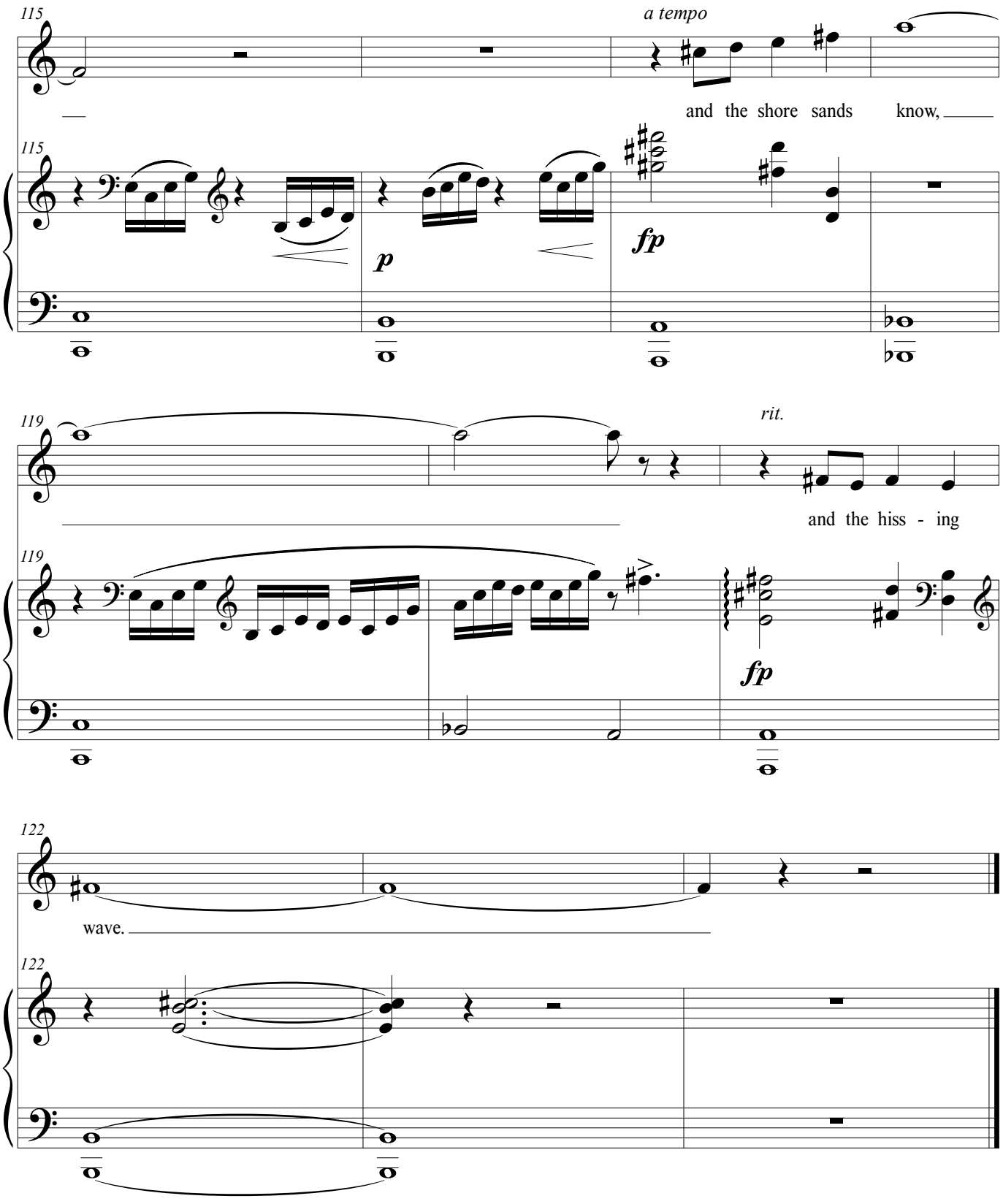

47
ens, Not the wind which lash - es,
47
ff
53
Not the spir - it that ev - er lash - es its own bod - y
53
58
to ter - ror and death,
58
p


63
not,
not the wind which
63
67
lash - es,
not the spi - rit that ev - er lash - es its own bo - dy
fz
8va
67
cresc.
8va
71
to ter - ror, to
71
f
mp
cresc.


75
ter - - - ror and death.
75
f
ff
rit.
79
a tempo
79
p
dim.
p
3
3
84
But I am that which comes un - seen and
84
3
3
3
3
3
3


88
rit.
sings, sings, sings,
88
3
p
93
a tempo
rit.
a tempo
which bab - bles in brooks and scoots in
93
8va
loco
p
97
show - ers on the land, which the
97


101
birds know in the woods
morn - ing and eve - ning,
101
3
3
3
pp
104
106
morn - ing and eve - ning,
106
p
111
rit.
a tempo
and the shore sands know,
111
p
fp


115
a tempo
and the shore sands know,
115
p
fp
119
rit.
and the hiss - ing
119
fp
122
wave.
122