In Blackwater Woods

Joelle Wallach

In Blackwater Woods

Look, the trees
are turning
their own bodies
into pillars

of light,
are giving off the rich
fragrance of cinnamon
and fulfillment,

the long tapers
of cattails
are bursting and floating away over
the blue shoulders

of the ponds,
and every pond,
no matter what its
name is, is

nameless now.
Every year
everything
I have ever learned

in my lifetime
leads back to this: the fires
and the black river of loss
whose other side

is salvation,
whose meaning
none of us will ever know.
To live in this world

you must be able
to do three things:
to love what is mortal;
to hold it

against your bones knowing
your own life depends on it;
and, when the time comes to let it go,
to let it go.

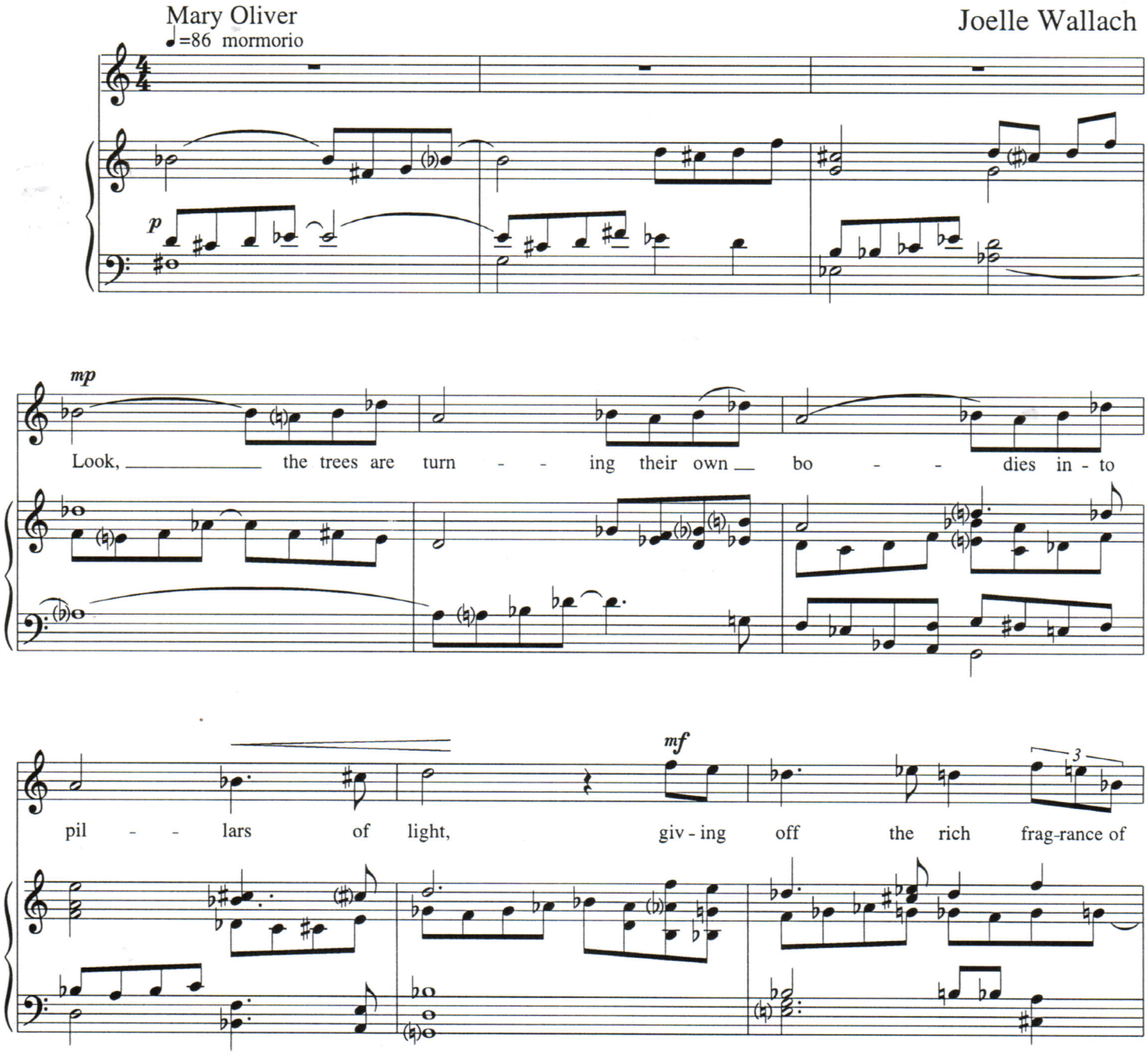
Mary Oliver

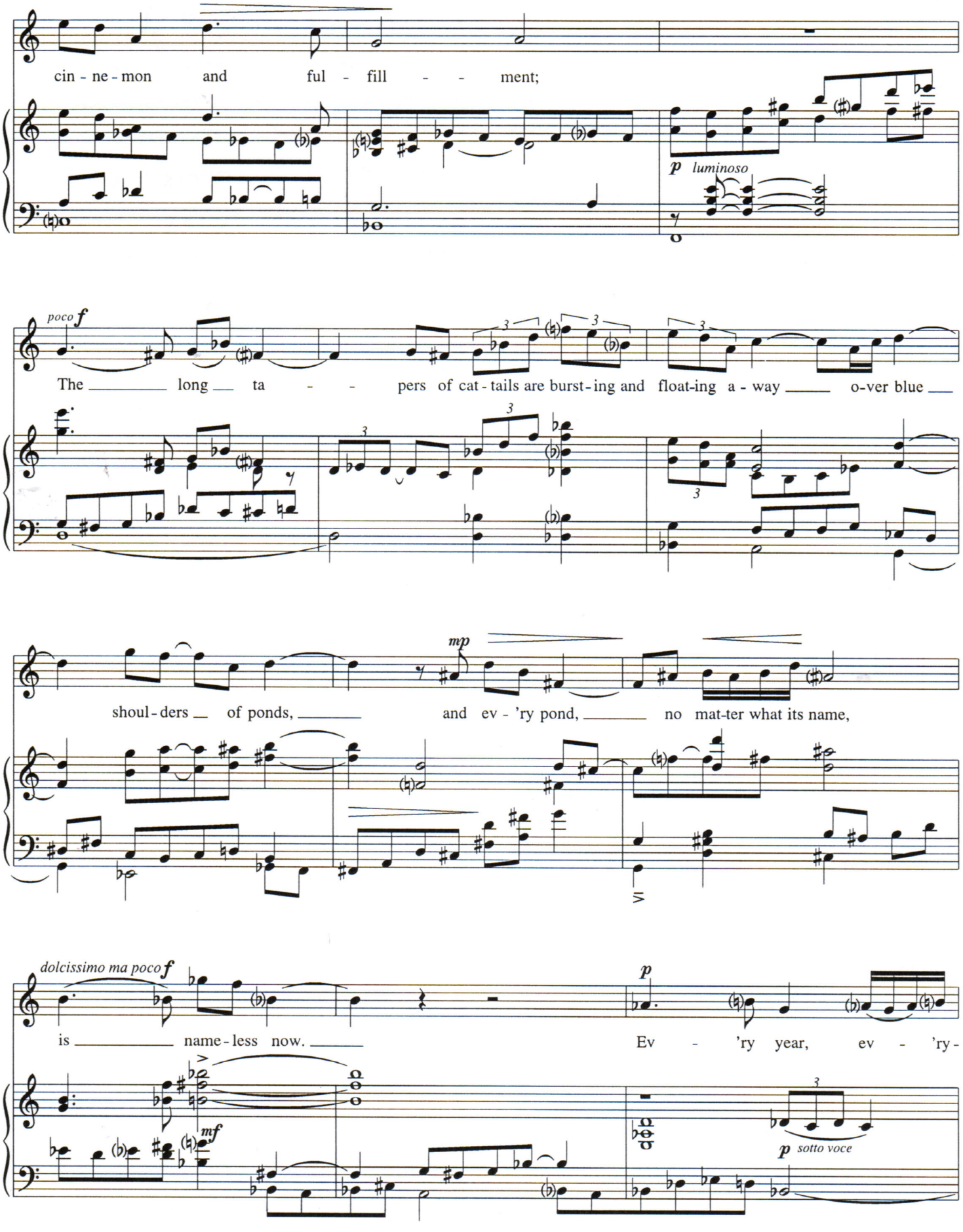
In Blackwater Woods

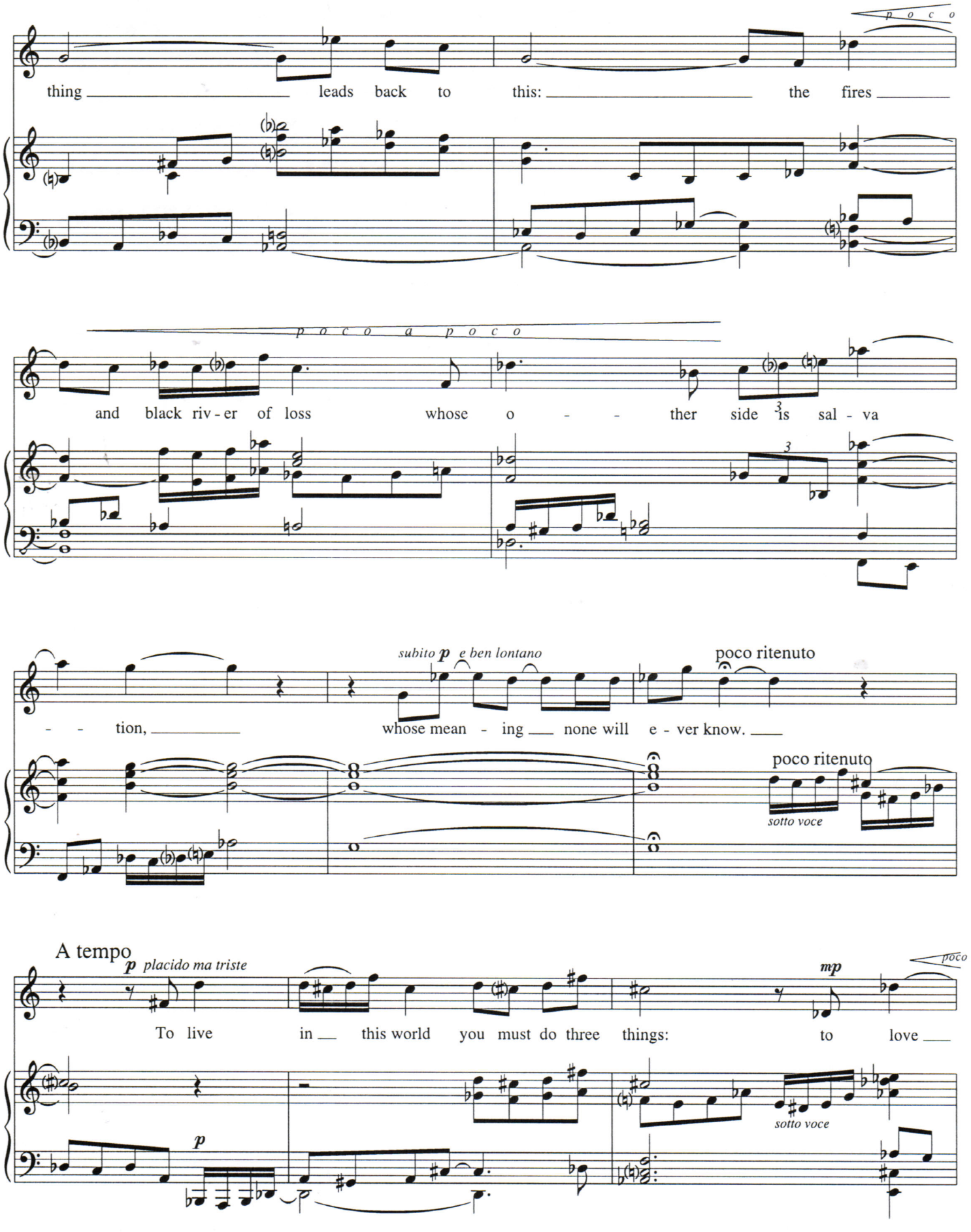
for Nancy Burke

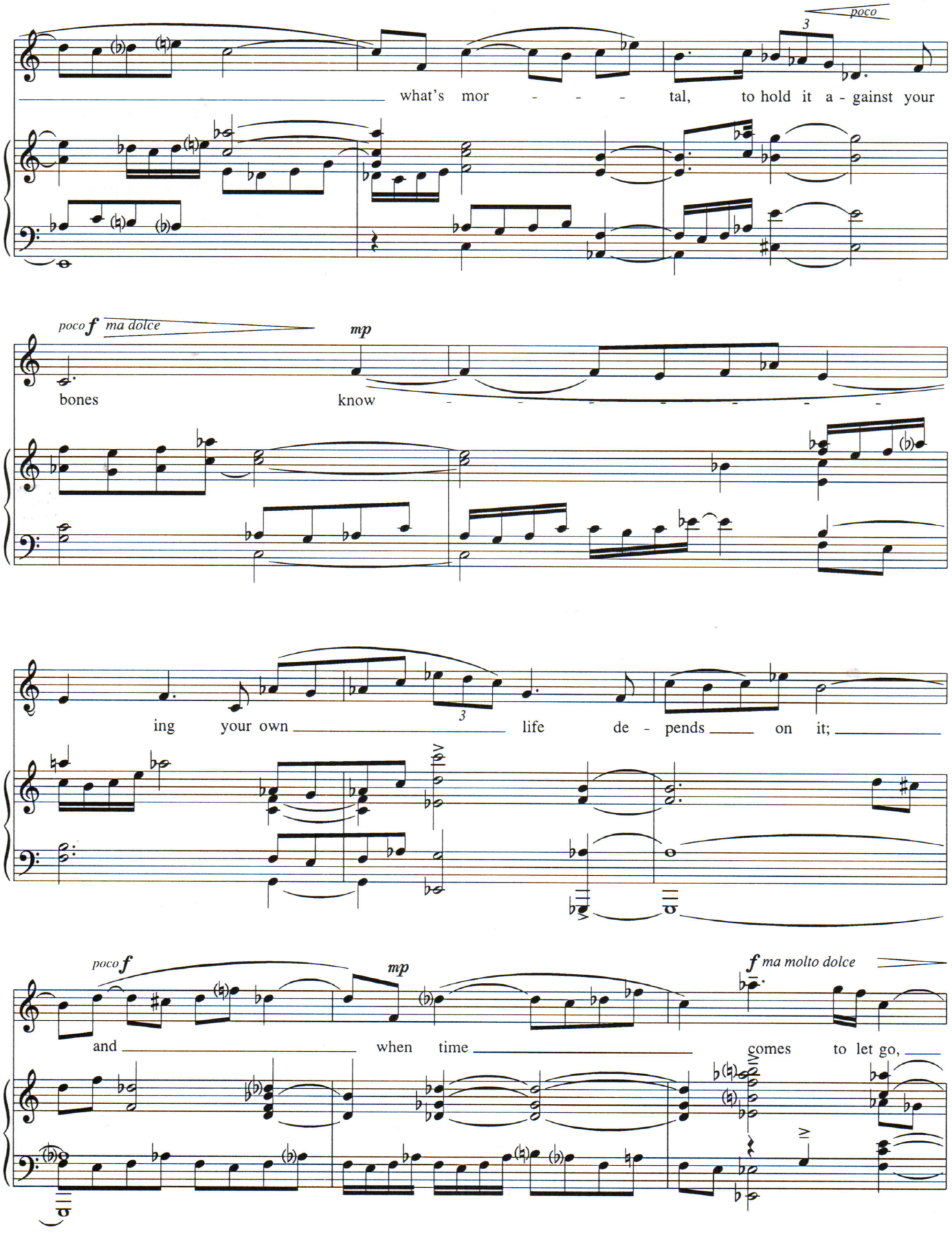
Mary Oliver

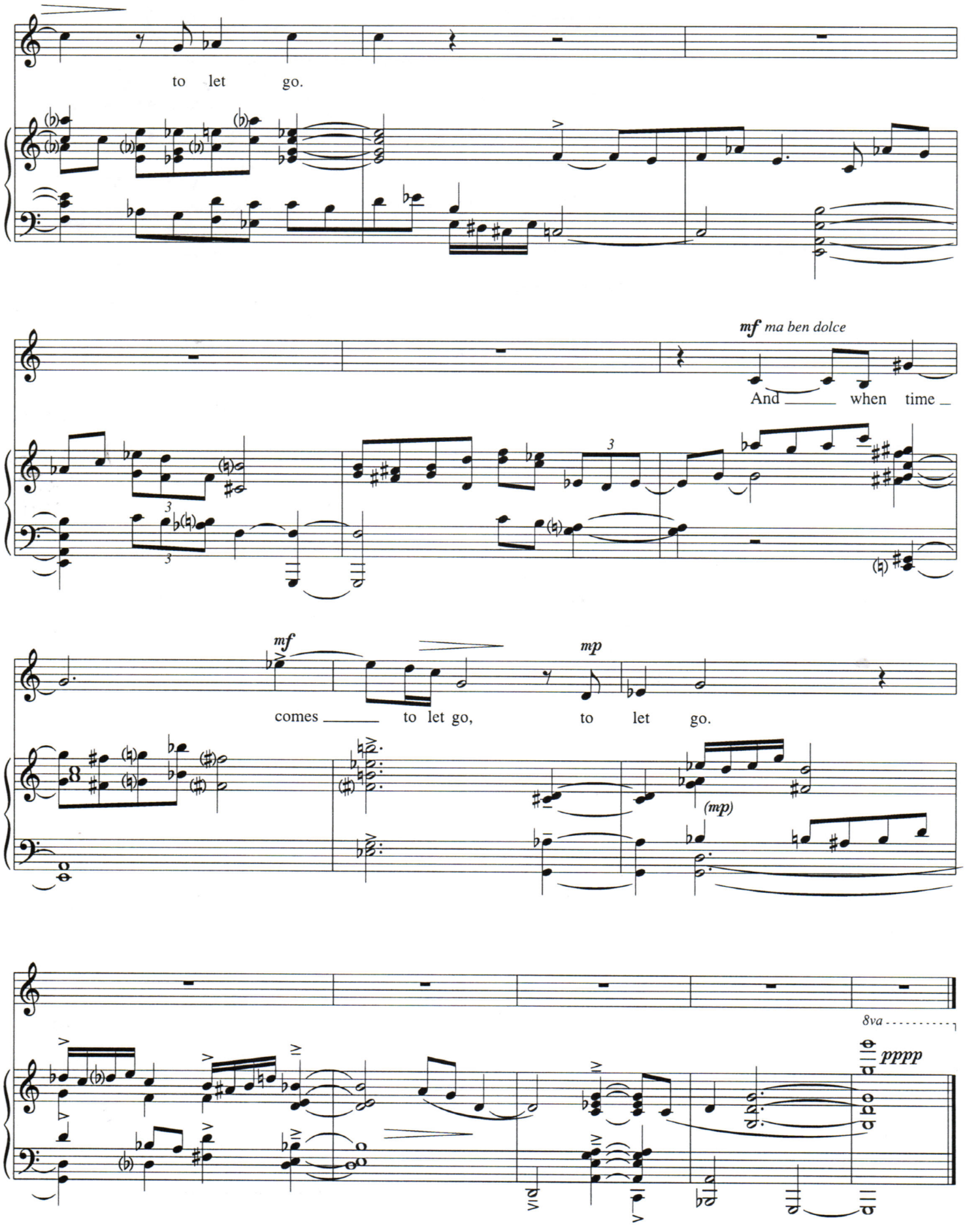
Joelle Wallach




cin - ne - mon and ful - fill - - ment;
p luminoso
poco f
The long ta - - pers of cat - tails are burst - ing and float - ing a - way o - ver blue
mp
shoul - ders of ponds, and ev - 'ry pond, no mat - ter what its name,
dolcissimo ma poco f
p
is name - less now.
Ev - 'ry year, ev - 'ry -
mf
p sotto voce


poco
thing leads back to this: the fires
poco a poco
and black riv - er of loss whose o - - ther side is sal - va
- - tion,
subito p e ben lontano
whose mean - ing none will e - ver know.
poco ritenuto
poco ritenuto
sotto voce
A tempo
p placido ma triste
To live in this world you must do three things:
mp
poco
to love
sotto voce
p


poco
what's mor - - - tal, to hold it a - gainst your
poco f ma dolce
mp
bones know
ing your own life de - pends on it;
poco f
mp
f ma molto dolce
and when time comes to let go,


to let go.
mf ma ben dolce
And when time
mf
mp
comes to let go, to let go.
(mp)
8va
pppp