ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

for Tenor and Orchestra

(piano reduction)

WILLIAM HOLAB

I.

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thine happiness,—
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

II.

O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!
O for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stained mouth;
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

III.

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs,
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

IV.

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night,
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

V.

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

VI.

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
To thy high requiem become a sod.

VII.

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad hear of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that oft-times hath
Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

VIII.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
In the next valley-glades:
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?

—JOHN KEATS, 1819

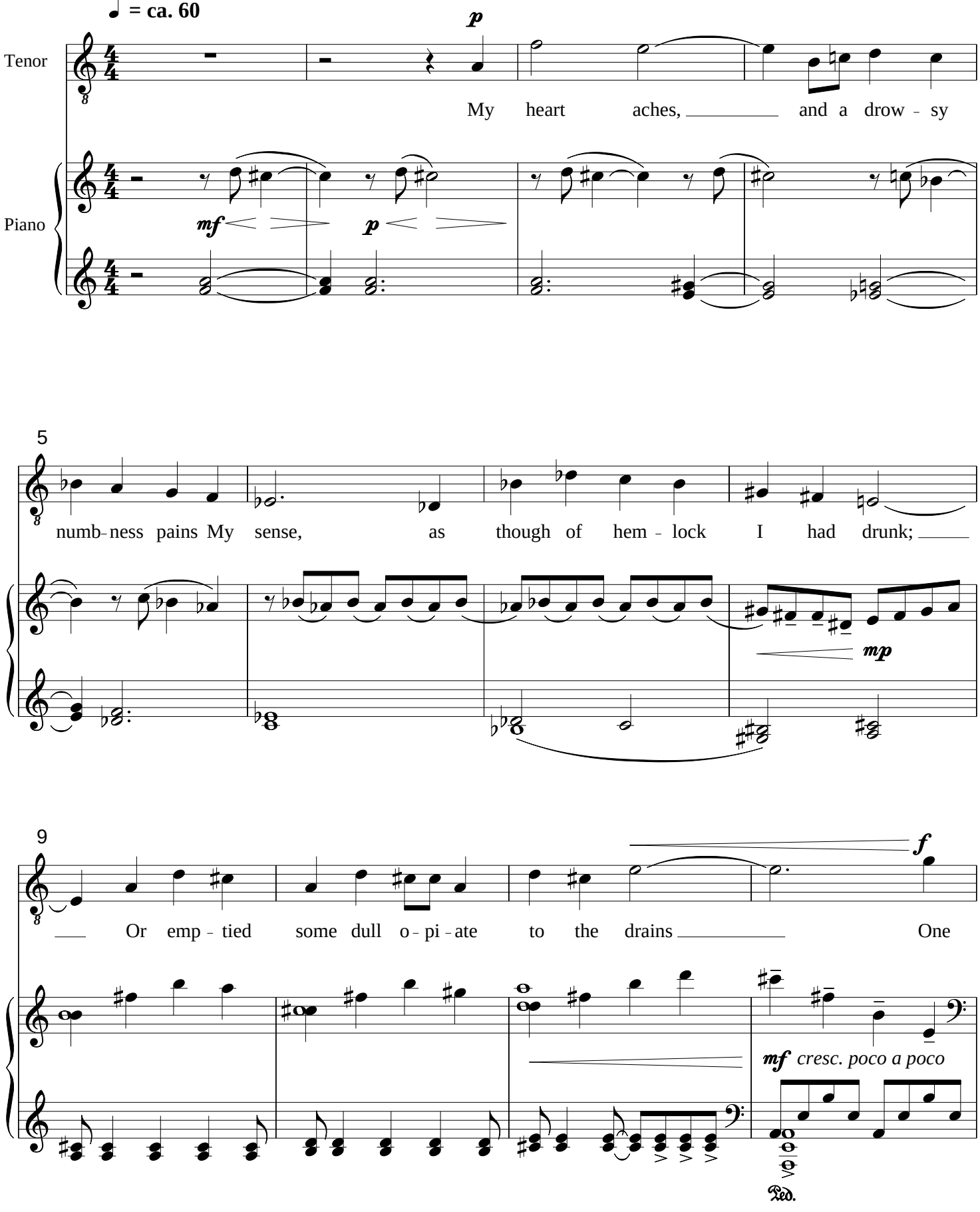
for Anne and Andy

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

John Keats

I.

William Holab



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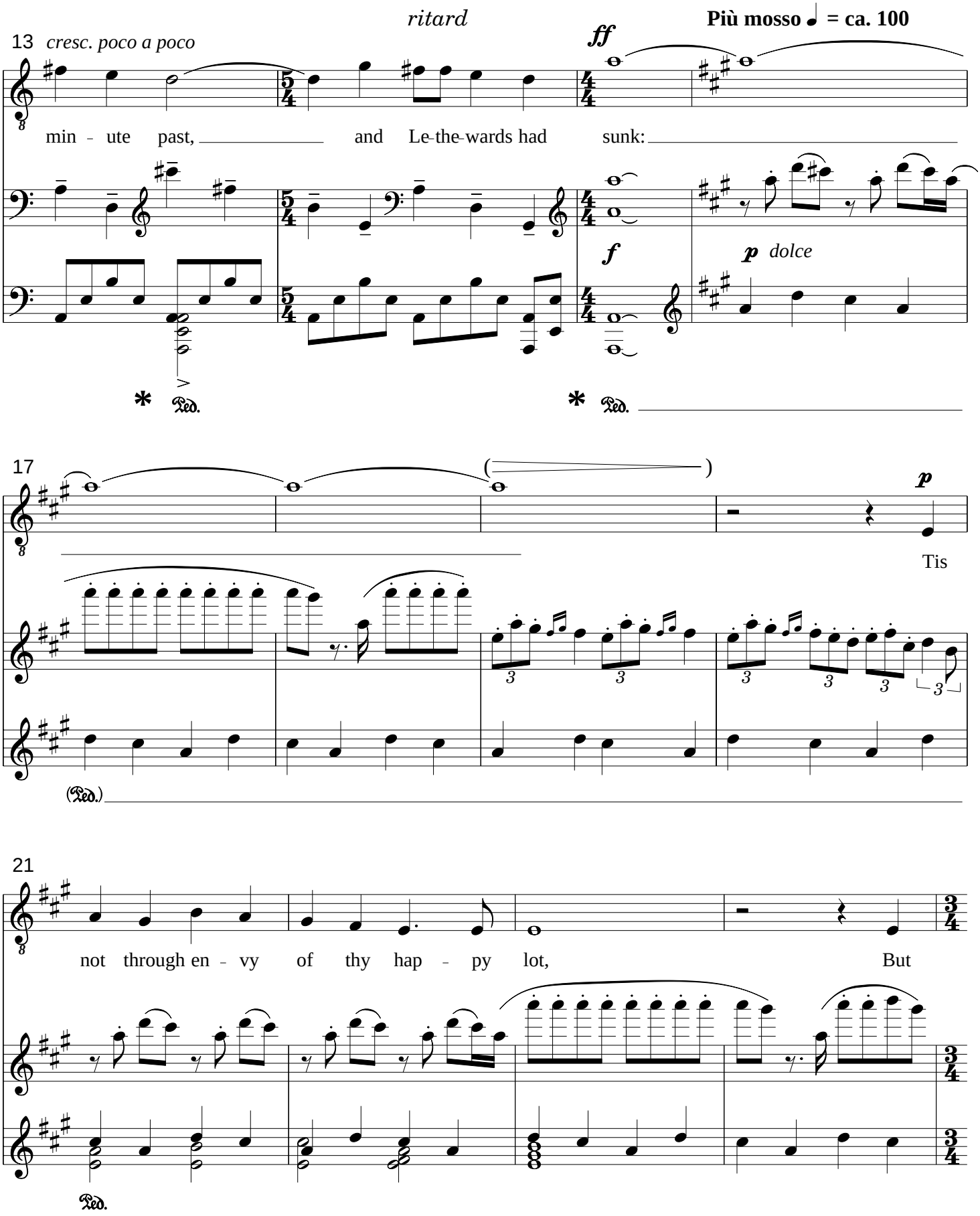
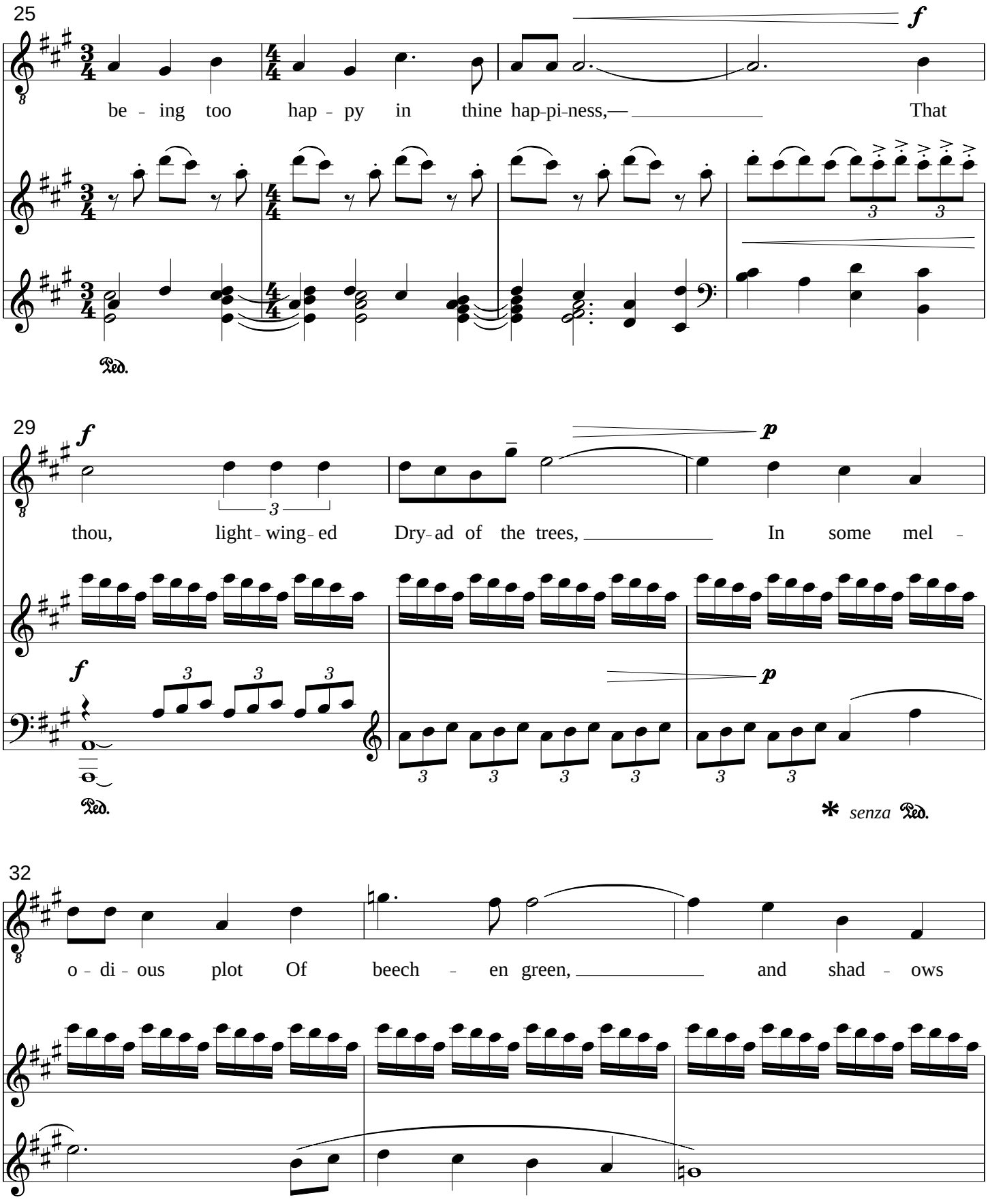
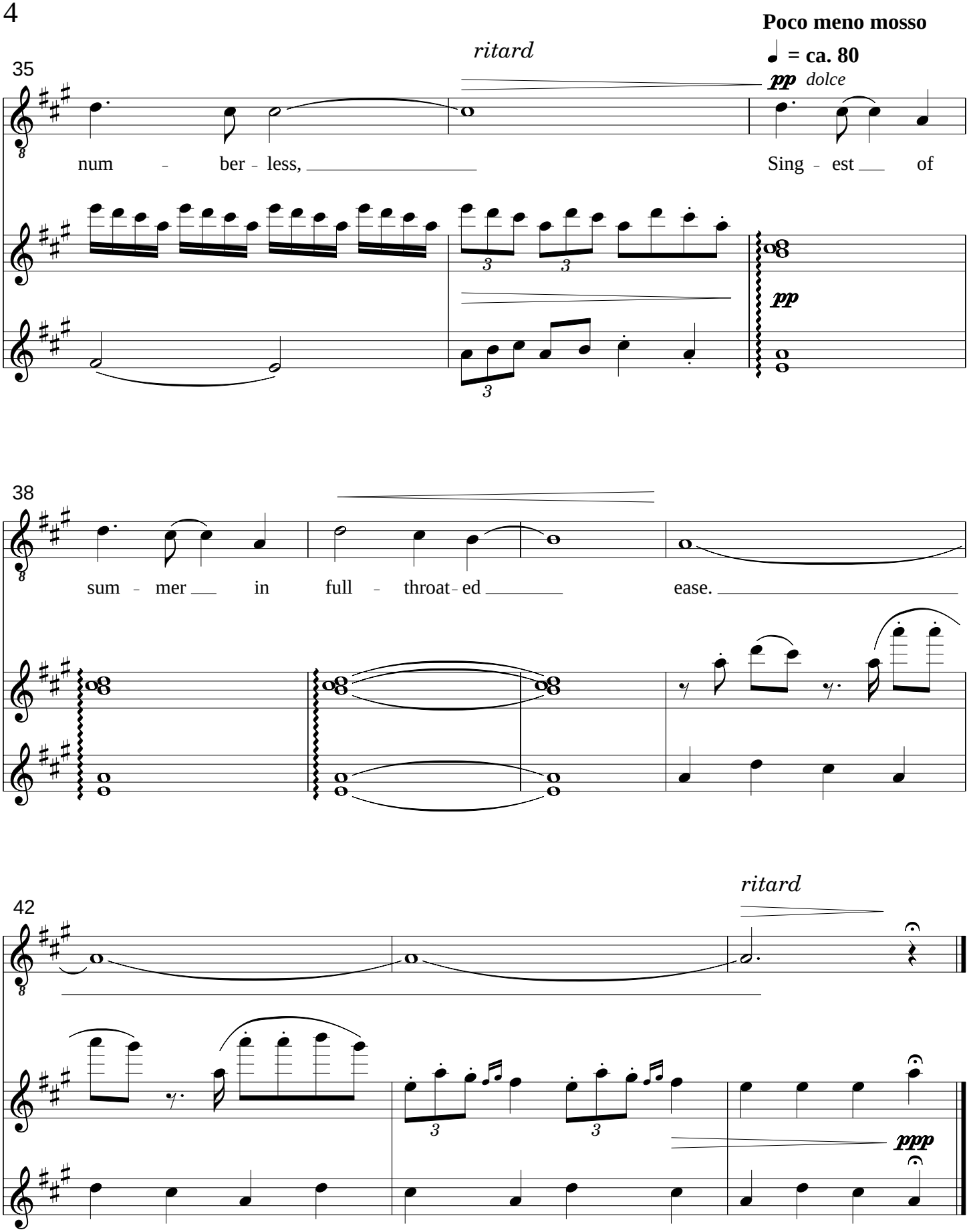
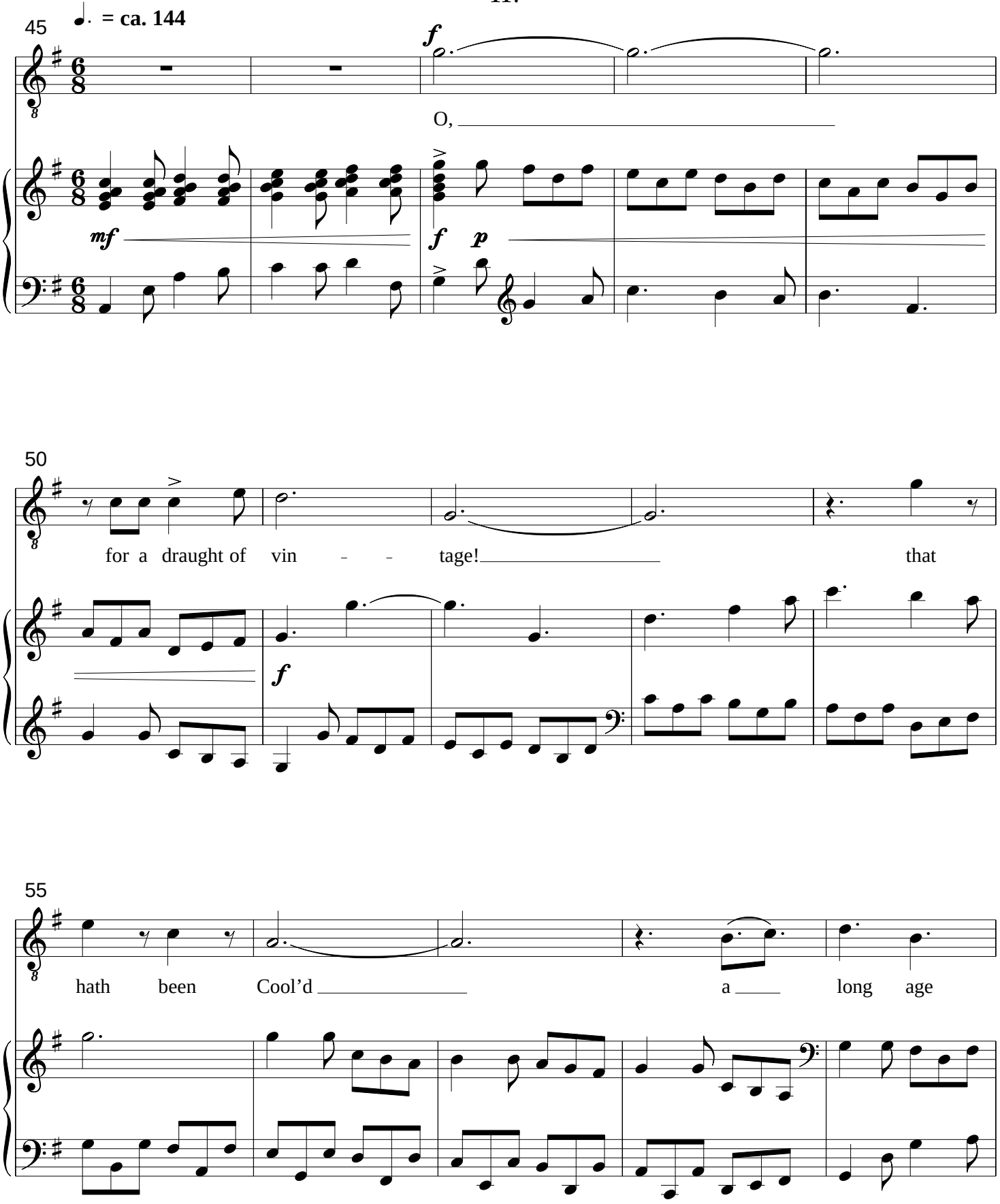
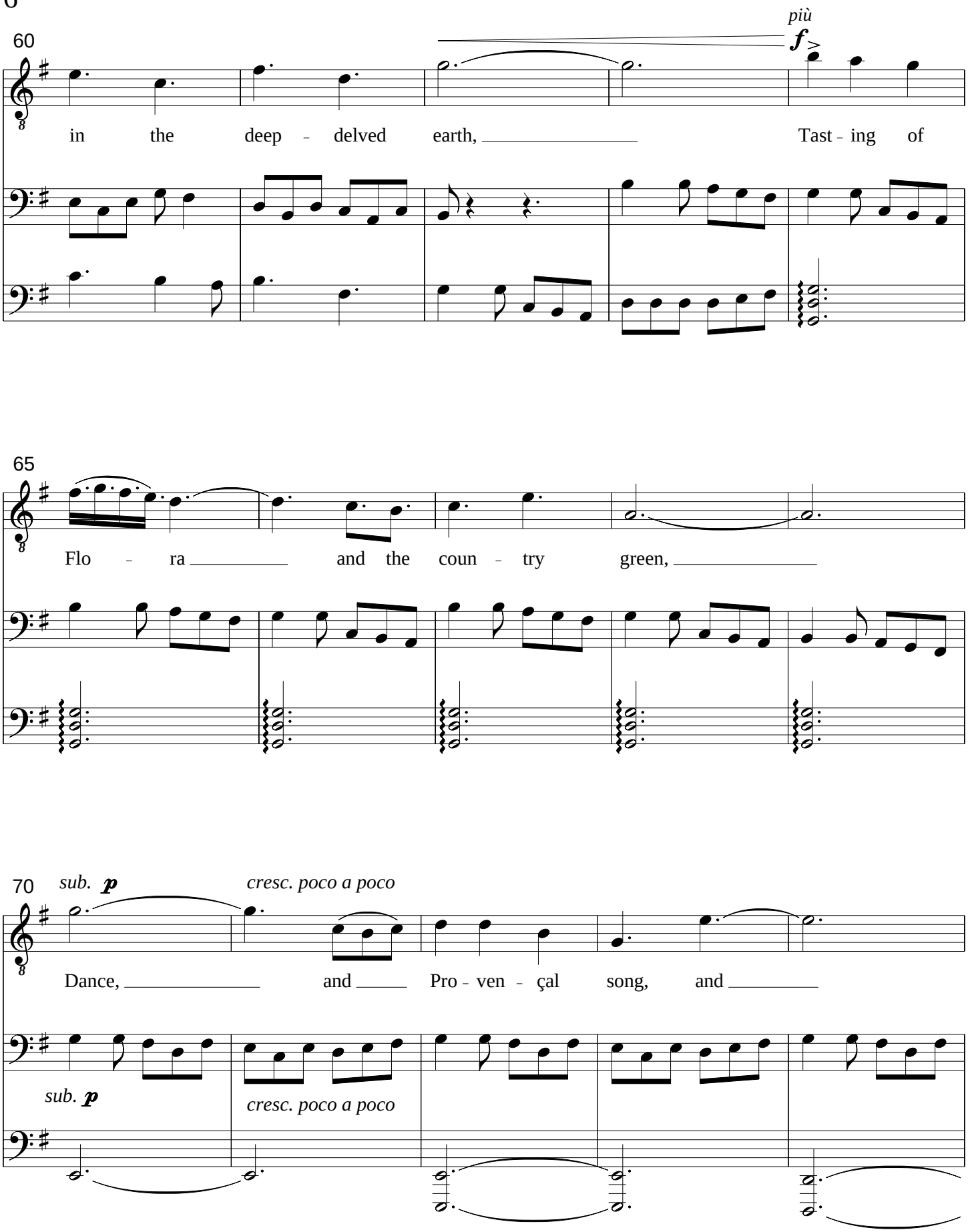
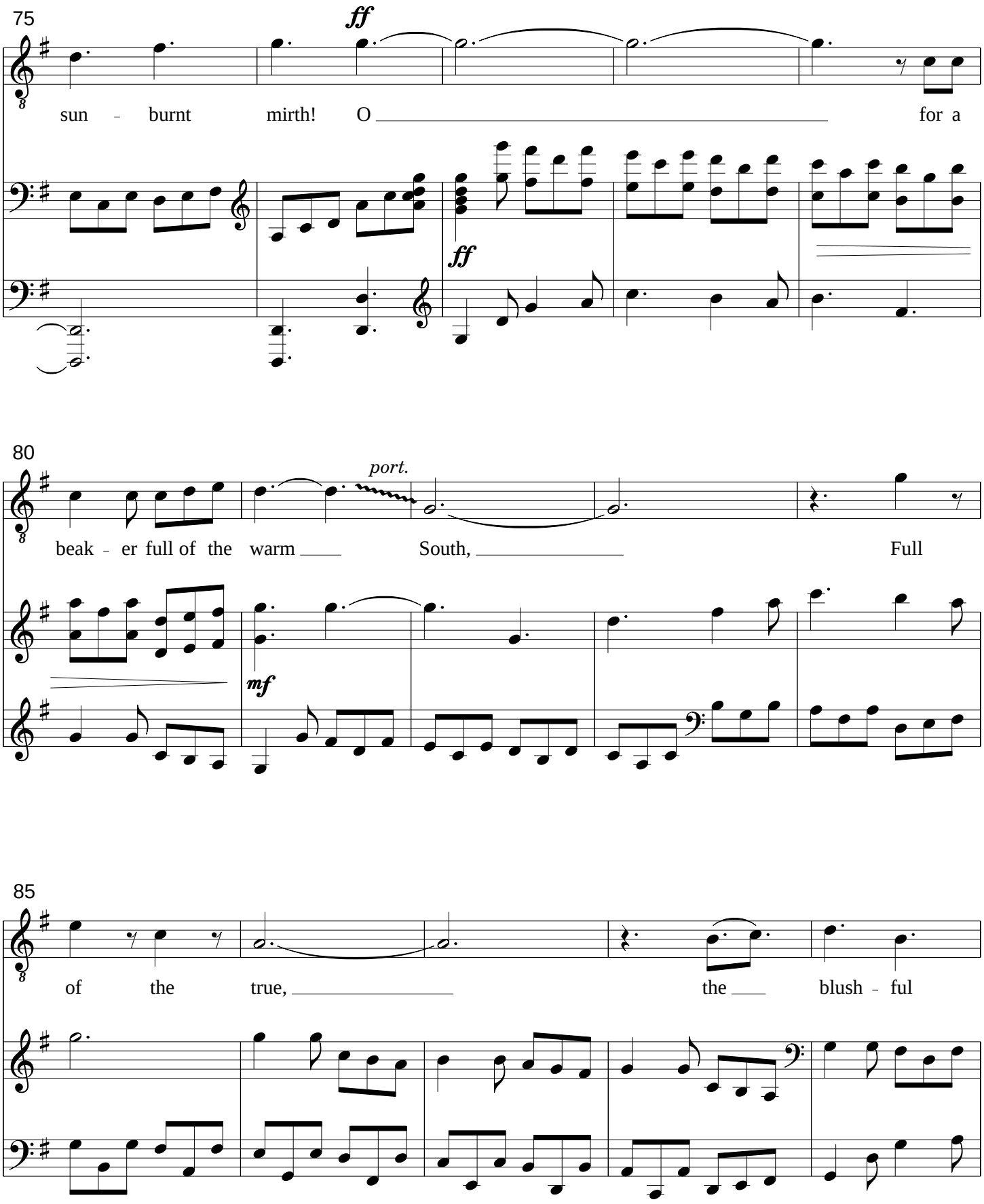

ritard
Più mosso ♩ = ca. 100
13 cresc. poco a poco
ff
min - ute past, and Le-the-wards had sunk:
f
p dolce
17
p
Tis
21
not through en - vy of thy hap - py lot, But

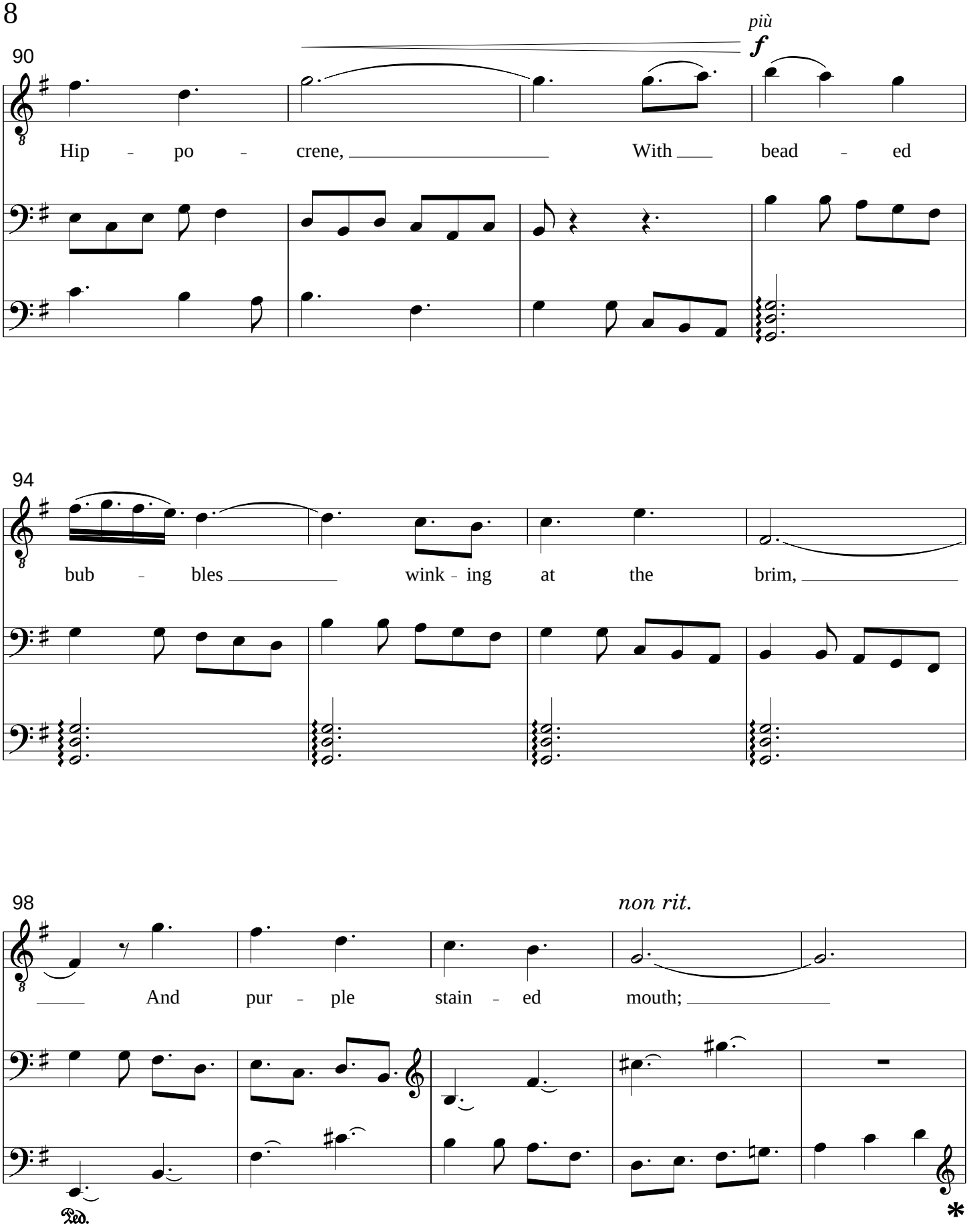

25
f
be - ing too hap - py in thine hap-pi-ness,— That
Ped.
29
f
p
thou, light - wing - ed Dry - ad of the trees, In some mel -
f
p
Ped.
* senza Ped.
32
o - di - ous plot Of beech - en green, and shad - ows


Poco meno mosso
♩ = ca. 80
35
ritard
pp dolce
num - ber - less,
Sing - est of
pp
38
sum - mer in full - throat - ed ease.
42
ritard
ppp
slight pause,
then attacca


45
♩. = ca. 144
f
O,
mf
f
p
50
for a draught of vin - - tage!
that
f
55
hath been Cool'd
a
long age


60
più
f
in the deep - delved earth, Tast - ing of
65
Flo - ra and the coun - try green,
70
sub. p
cresc. poco a poco
Dance, and Pro - ven - çal song, and
sub. p
cresc. poco a poco


75
ff
sun - burnt mirth! O for a
ff
80
port.
beak - er full of the warm South, Full
mf
85
of the true, the blush - ful


90
più
f
Hip - po - crene, With bead - ed
94
bub - bles wink - ing at the brim,
98
non rit.
And pur - ple stain - ed mouth;
Ped.
*

Poco meno mosso

♩. = ca. 100

103

p

That I might drink, and leave the world un -

pp

110

seen, And with thee fade a - way in -

117

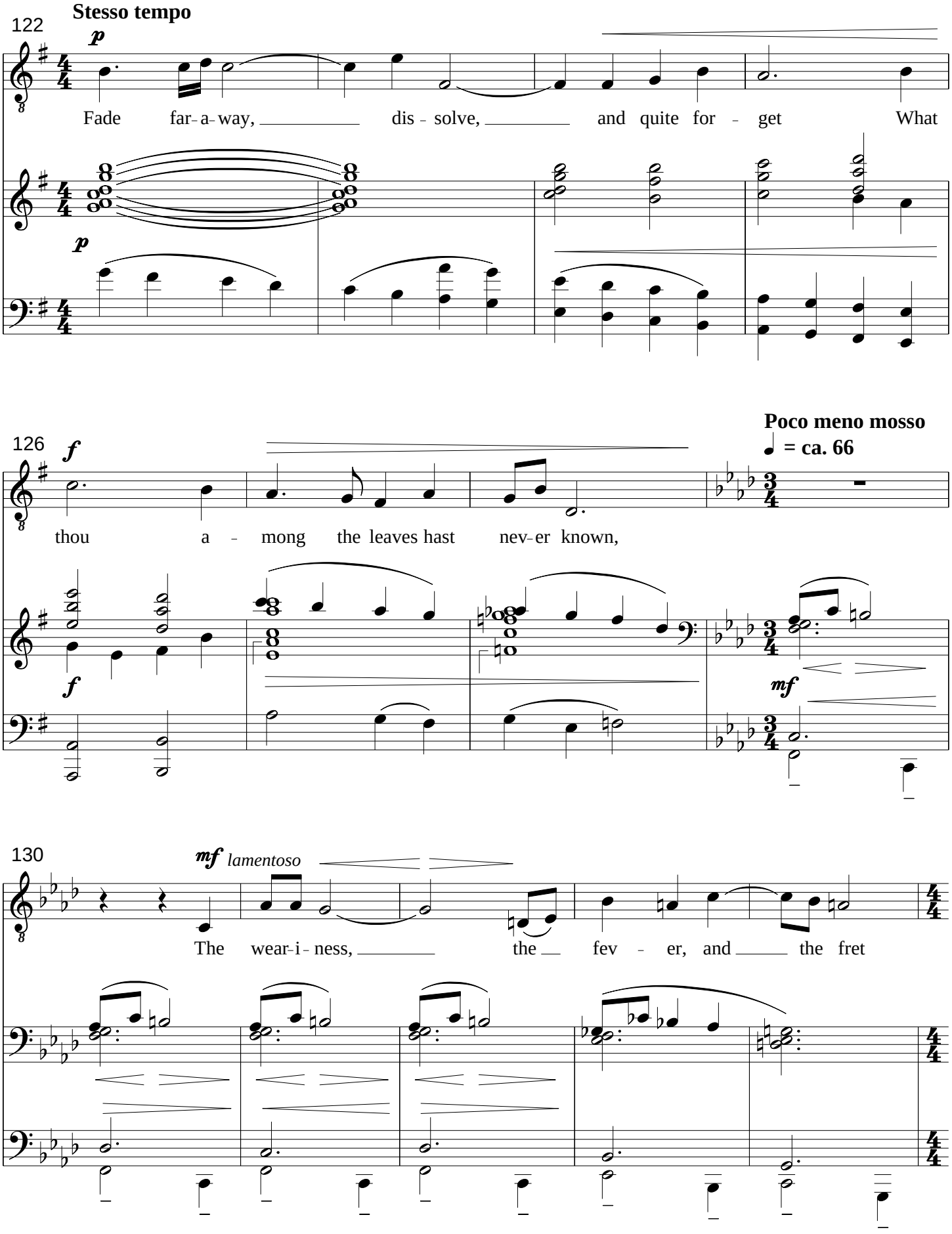
Meno mosso, ♩ = ca. 76

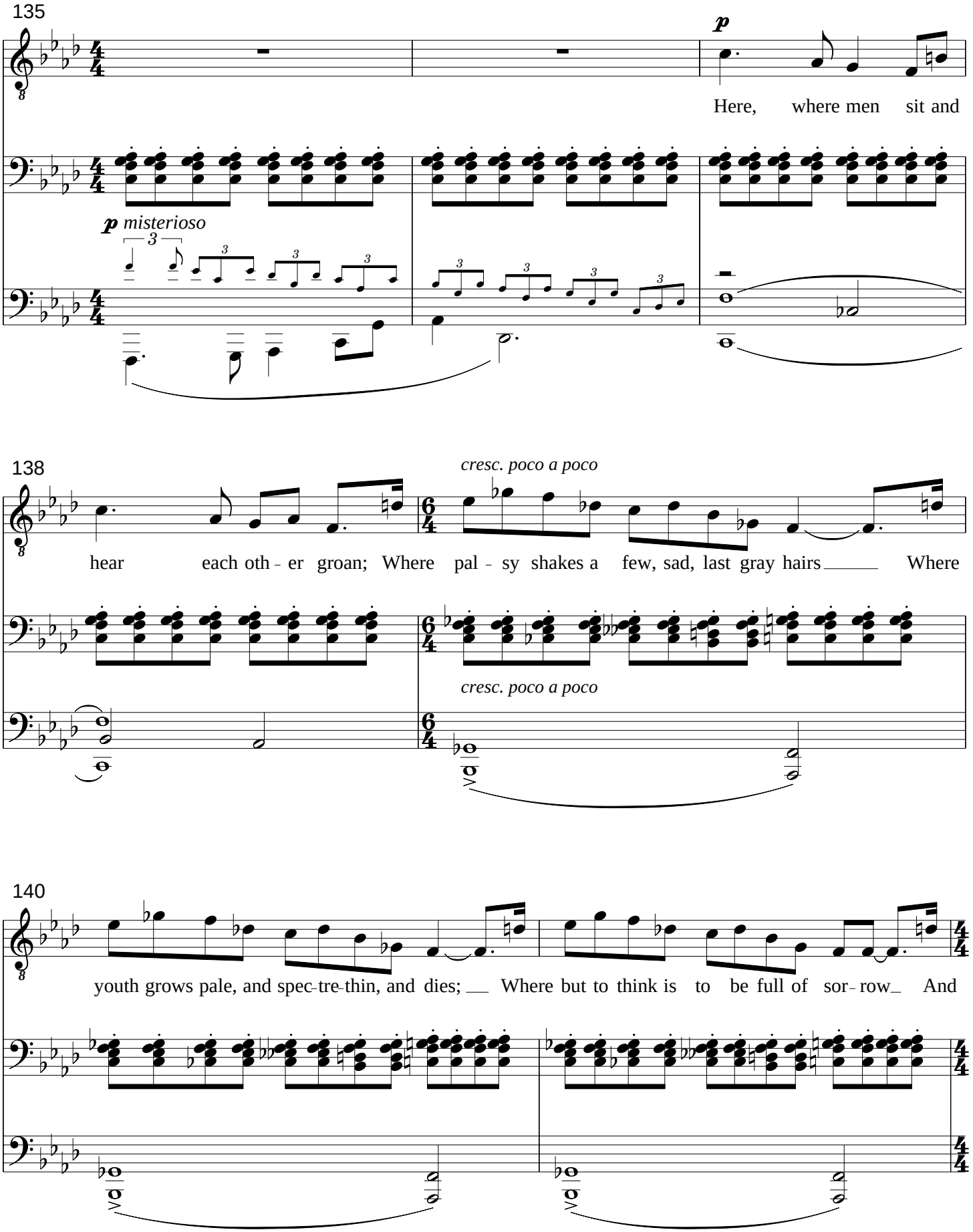
to the for - est dim: (close to "m")

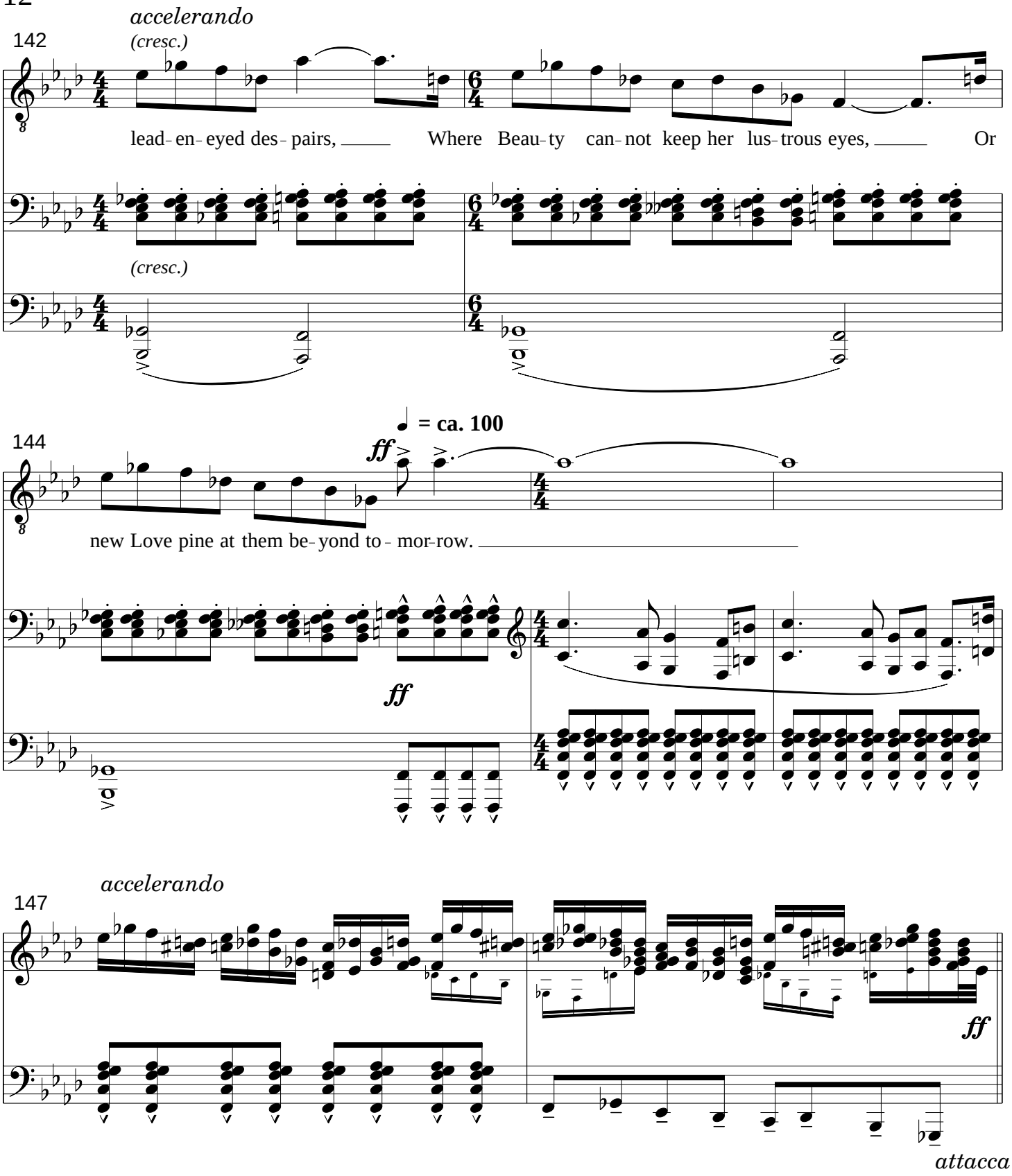
Ped.

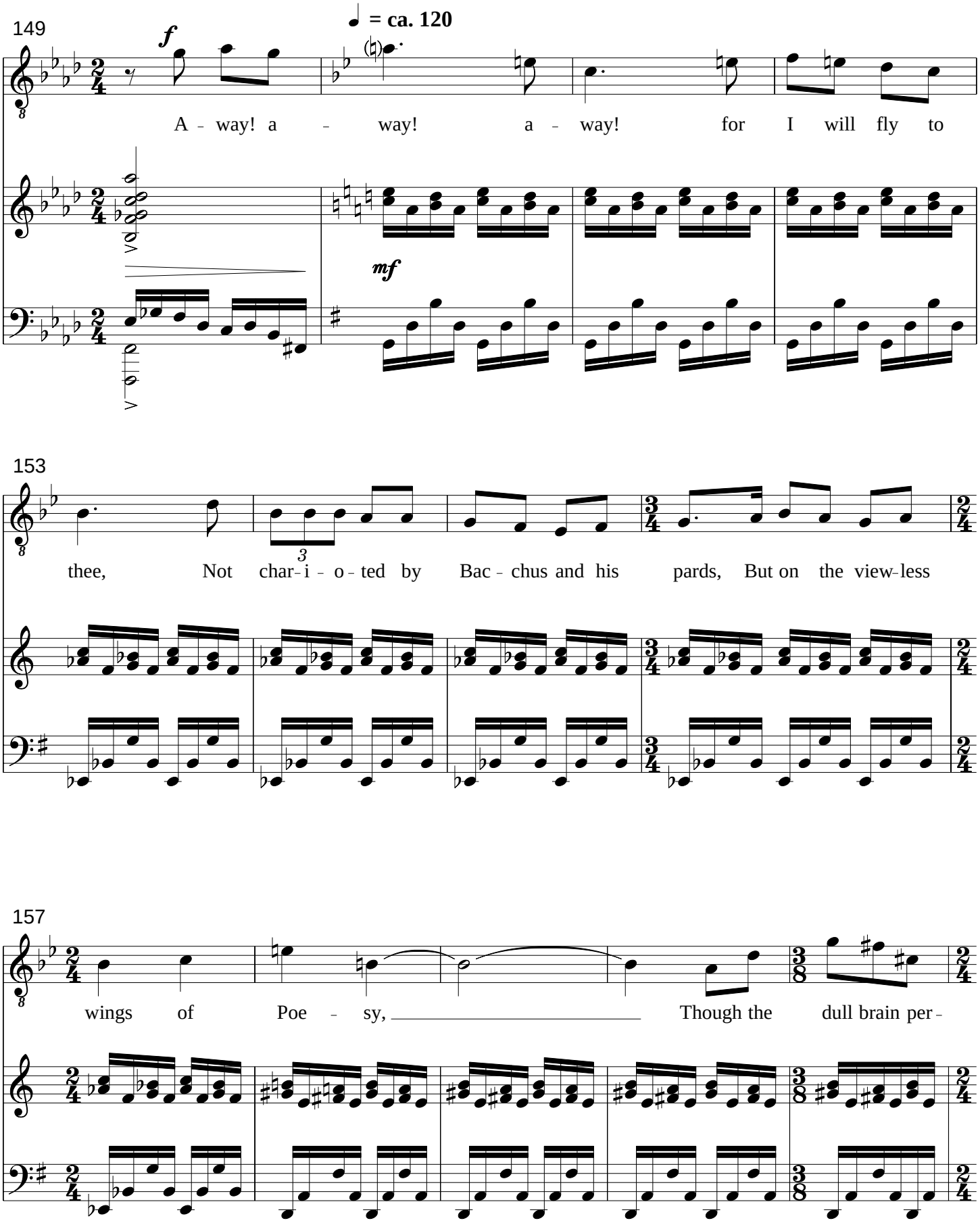
*

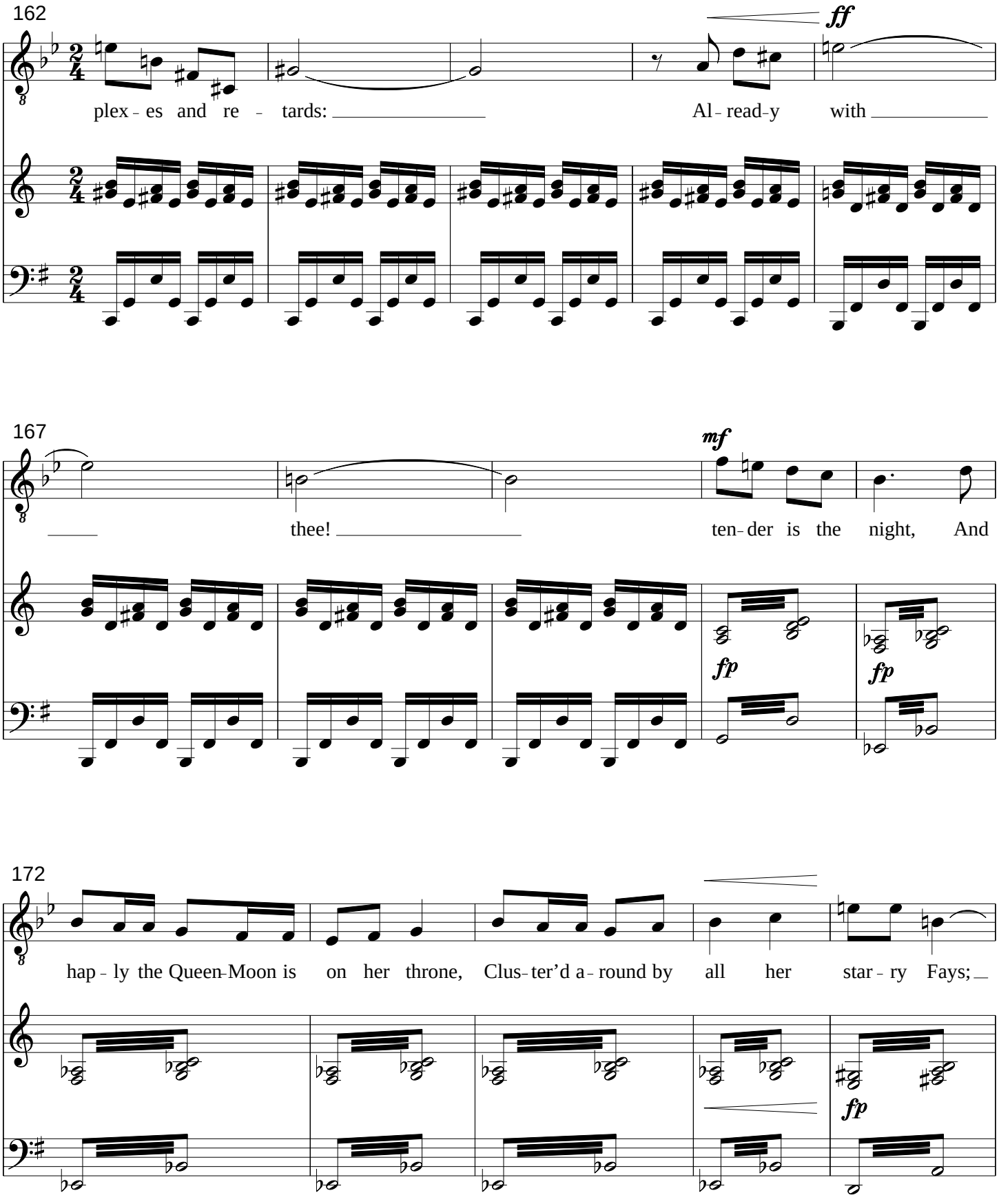
attacca

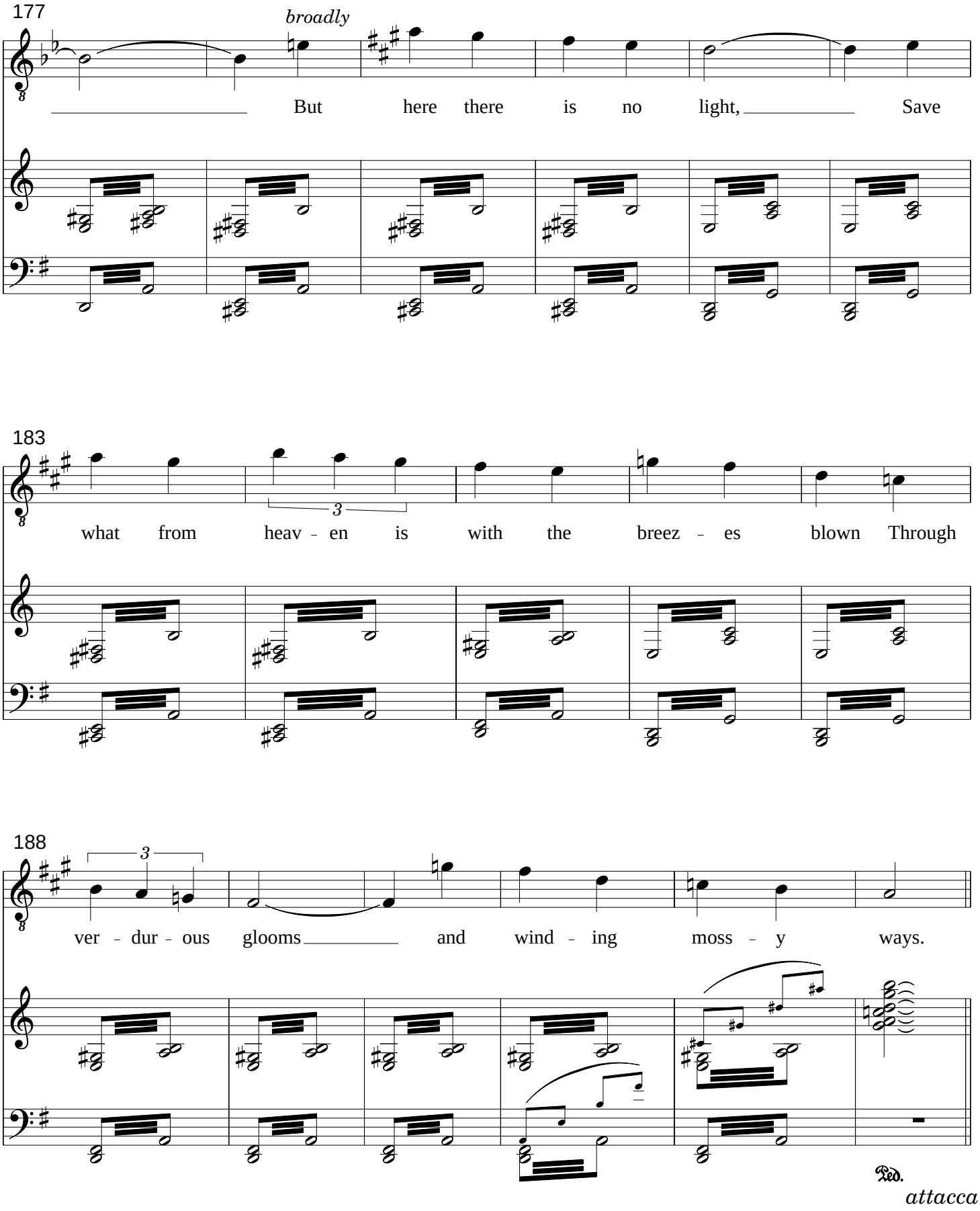

Stesso tempo
122
p
Fade far-a-way, dis-solve, and quite for-get What
p
126
f
thou a-mong the leaves hast nev-er known,
f
Poco meno mosso
♩ = ca. 66
mf
130
mf lamentoso
The wear-i-ness, the fev-er, and the fret


135
p
Here, where men sit and
p misterioso
138
cresc. poco a poco
hear each oth - er groan; Where pal - sy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs Where
cresc. poco a poco
140
youth grows pale, and spec-tre-thin, and dies; Where but to think is to be full of sor - row And

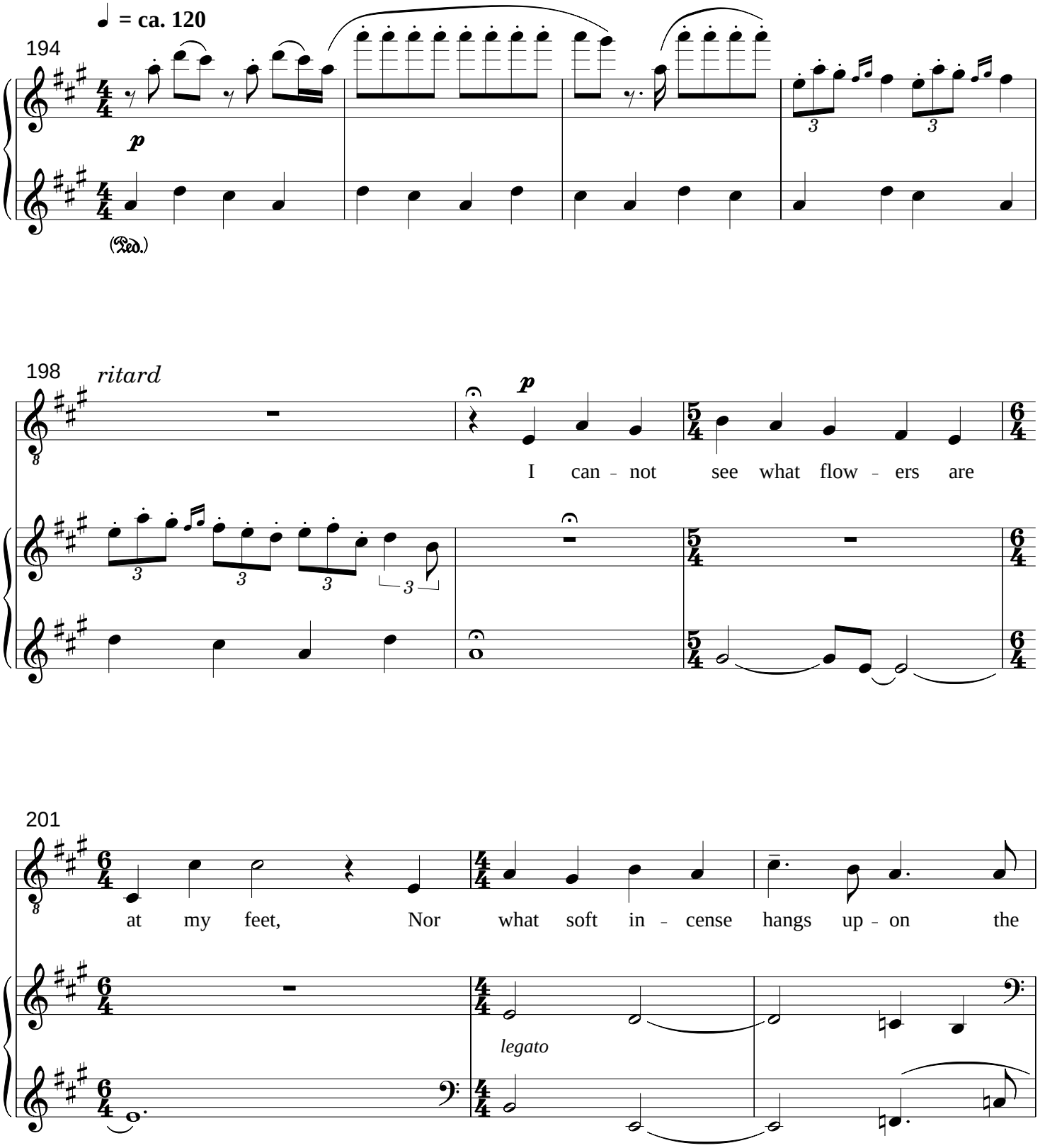

accelerando
(cresc.)
142
lead- en- eyed des- pairs, Where Beau- ty can- not keep her lus- trous eyes, Or
(cresc.)
144
♩ = ca. 100
ff
new Love pine at them be- yond to- mor- row.
ff
accelerando
147
ff
attacca

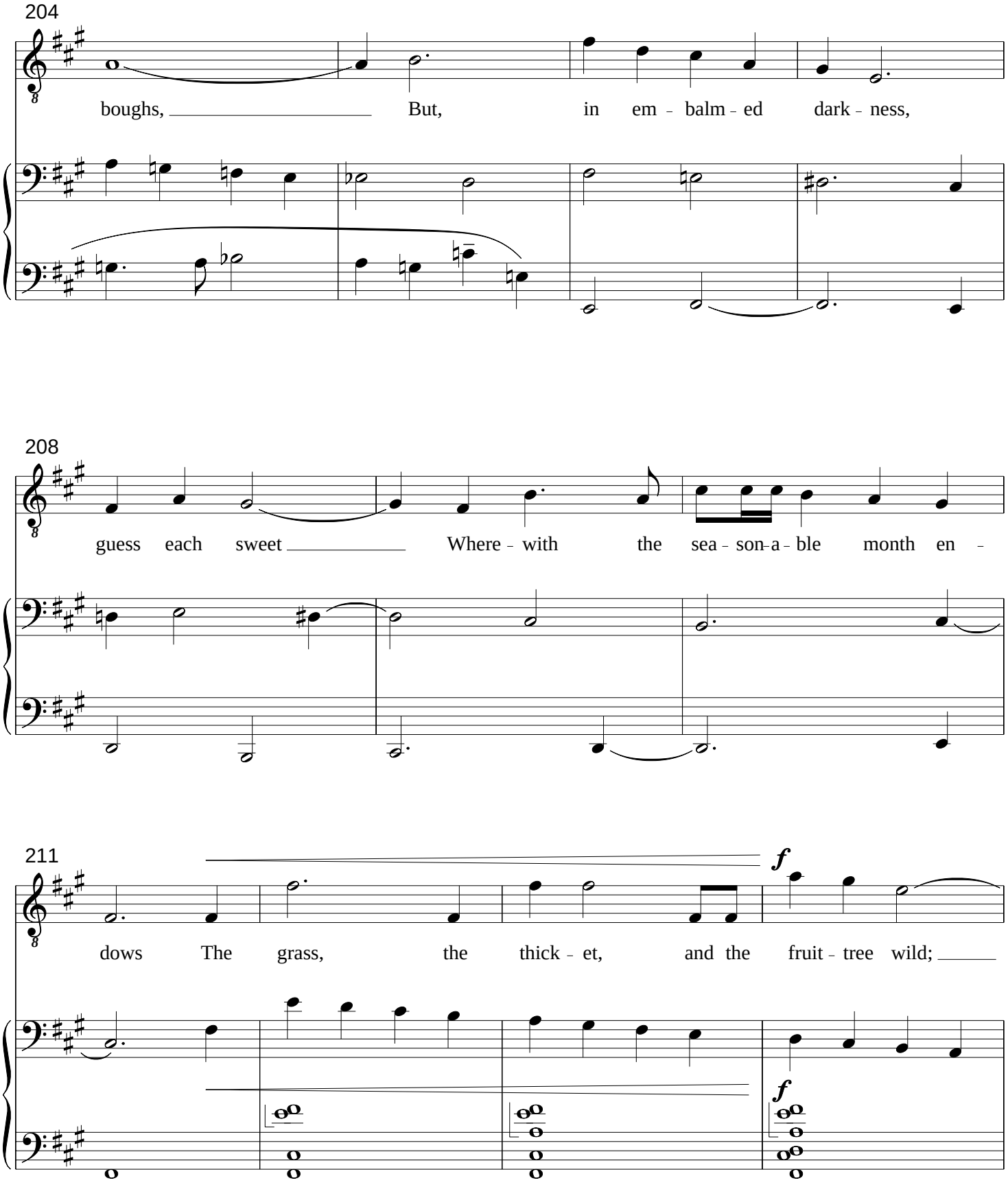

149
♩ = ca. 120
f
A - way! a - way! a - way! for I will fly to
mf
153
thee, Not char-i-o-ted by Bac-chus and his pards, But on the view-less
157
wings of Poe - sy, Though the dull brain per-

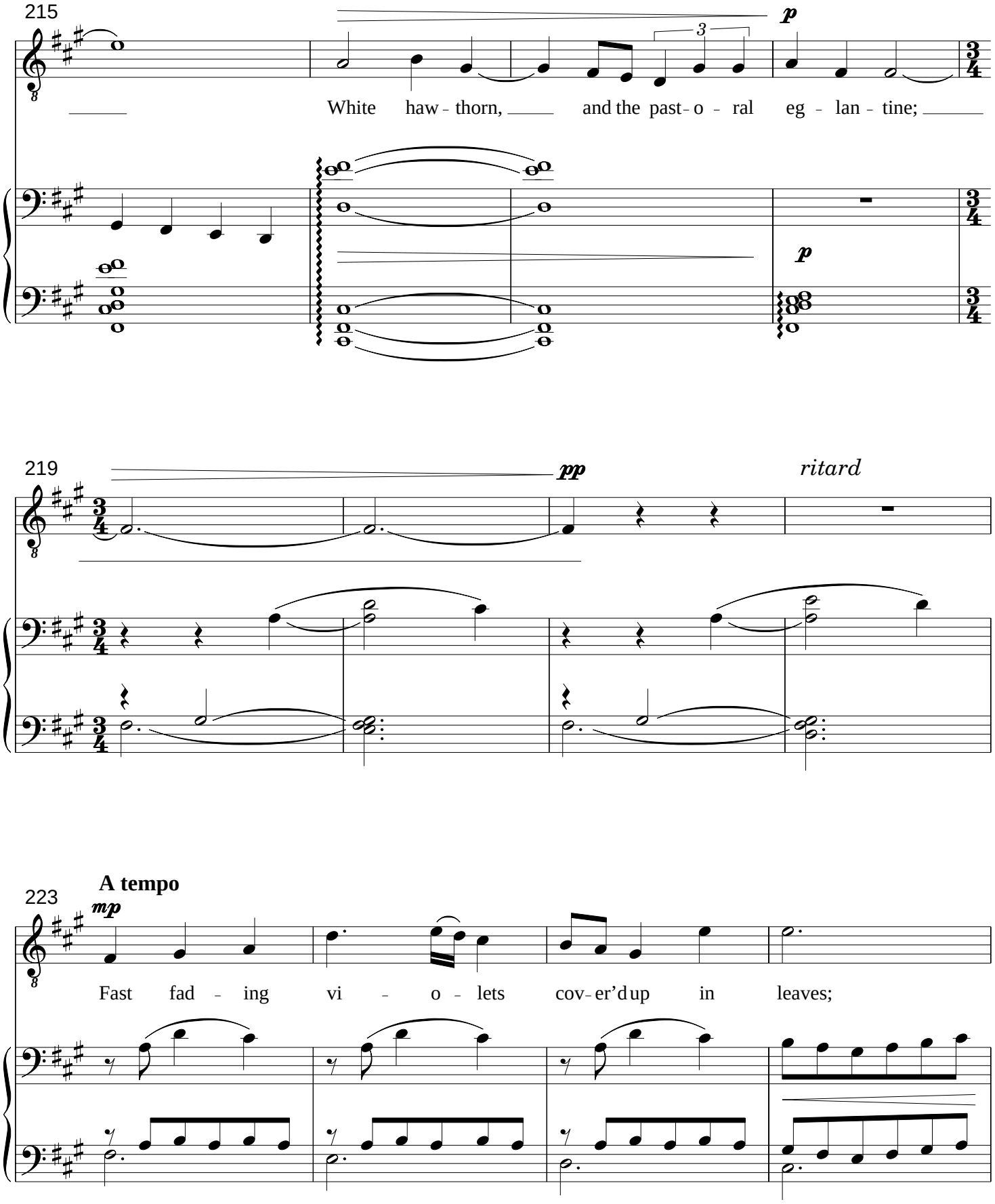

162
ff
plex - es and re - tards: Al - read - y with
167
mf
thee! ten - der is the night, And
fp
fp
172
hap - ly the Queen-Moon is on her throne, Clus - ter'd a - round by all her star - ry Fays;
fp

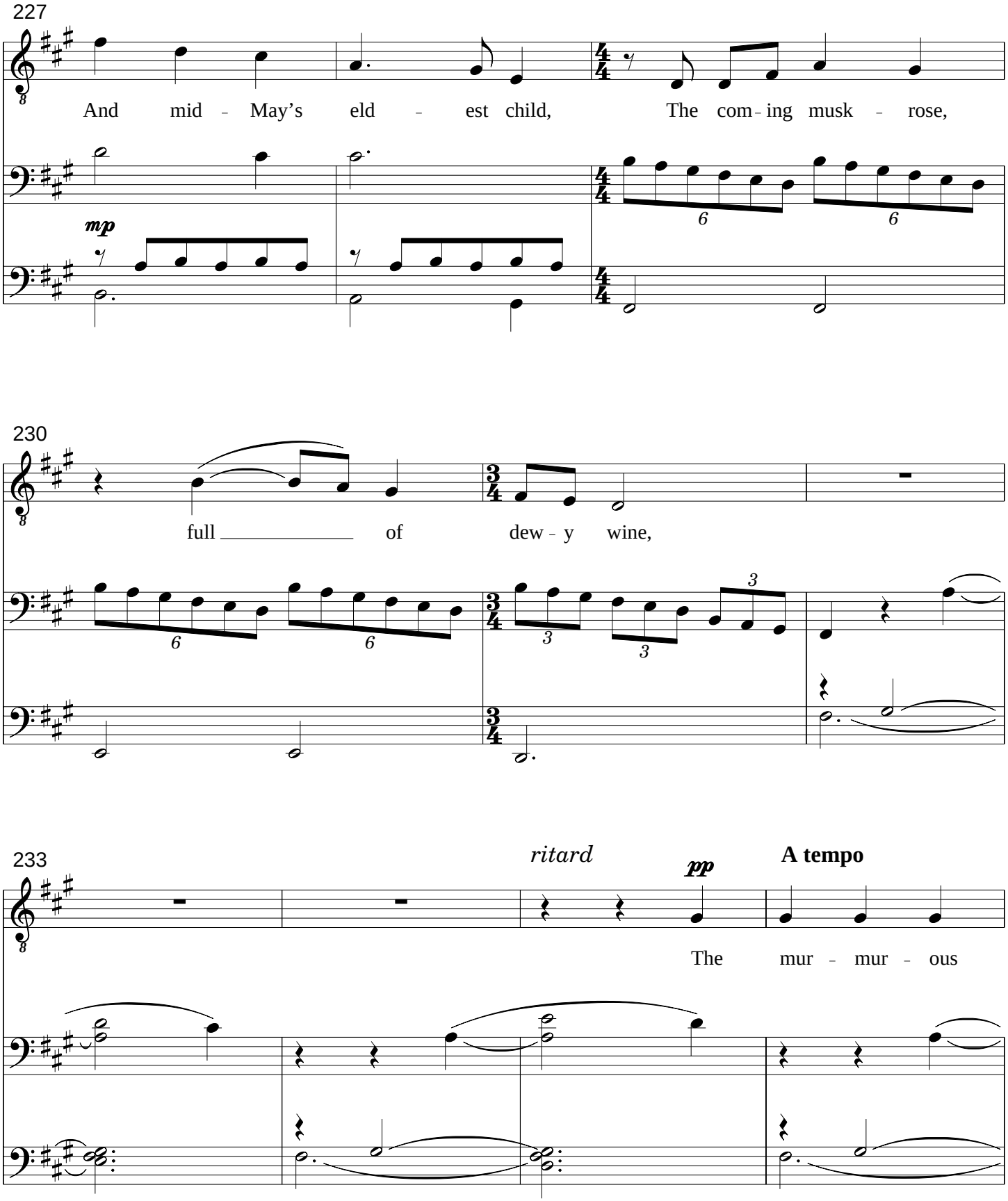

177
broadly
But here there is no light, Save
183
what from heav - en is with the breez - es blown Through
188
ver - dur - ous glooms and wind - ing moss - y ways.
Ped.
attacca

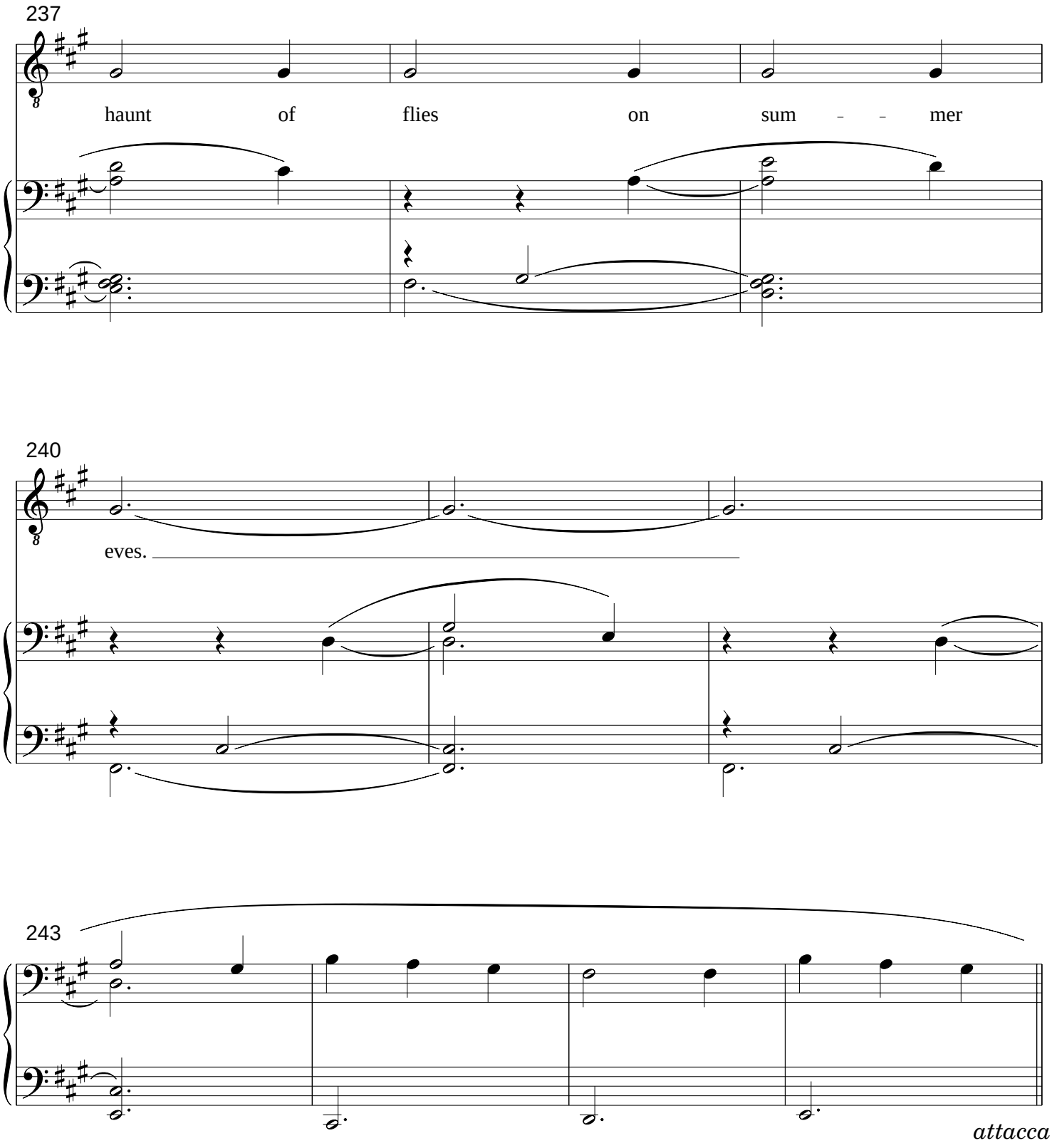
V.

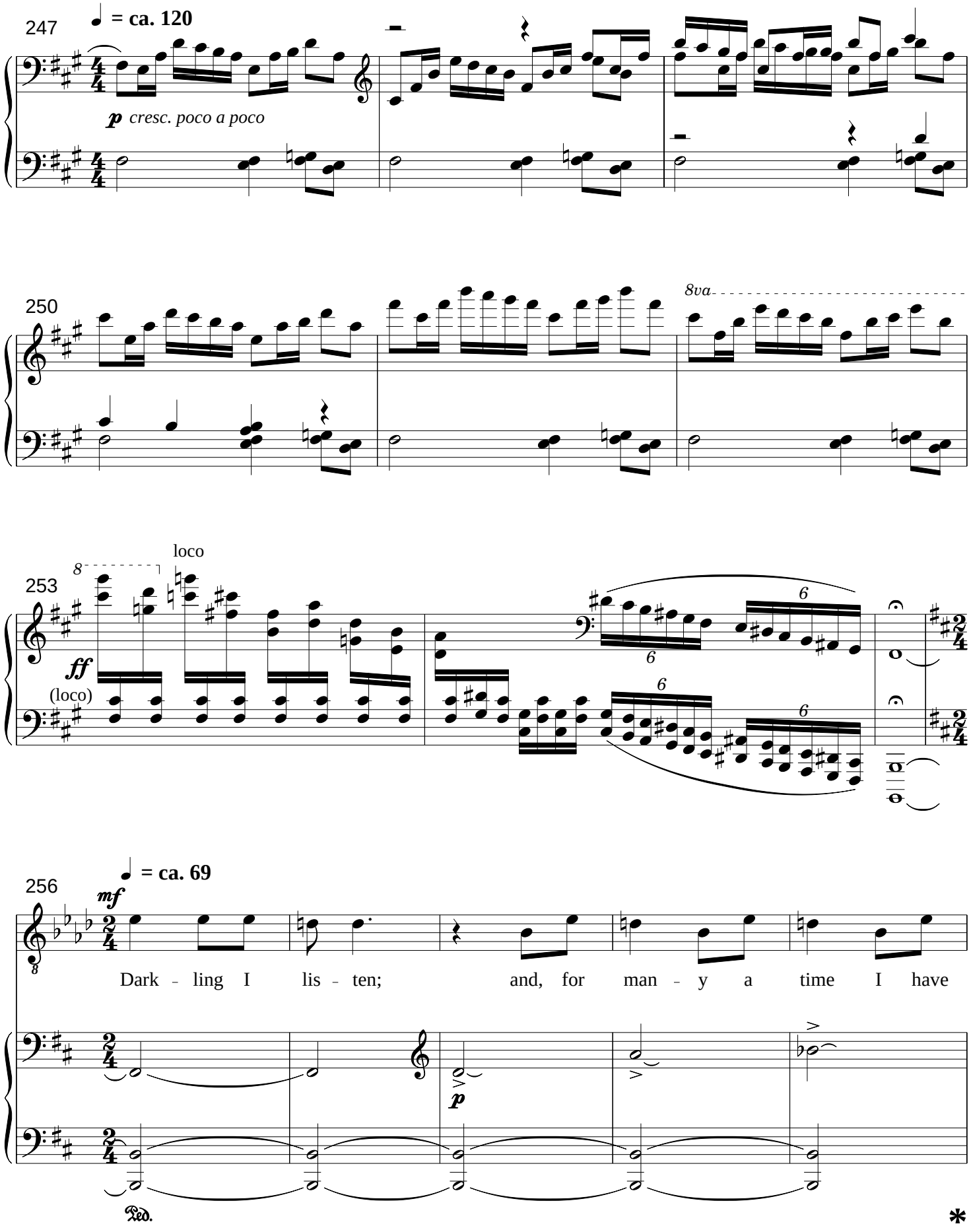

♩ = ca. 120
194
p
(Ped.)
198
ritard
p
I can - not see what flow - ers are
201
at my feet, Nor what soft in - cense hangs up - on the
legato

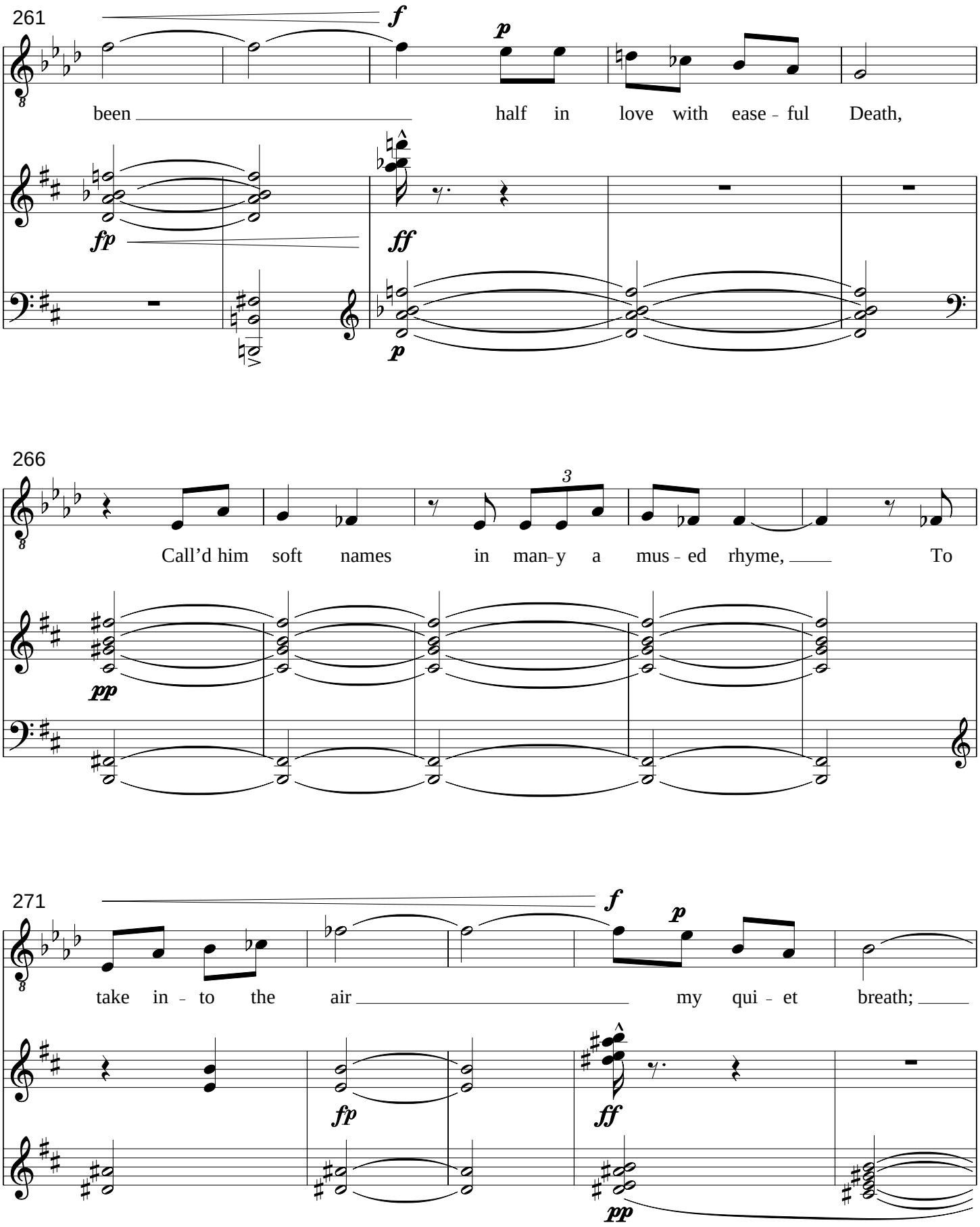

204
boughs, But, in em - balm - ed dark - ness,
208
guess each sweet Where - with the sea - son - a - ble month en -
211
dows The grass, the thick - et, and the fruit - tree wild;
f
f

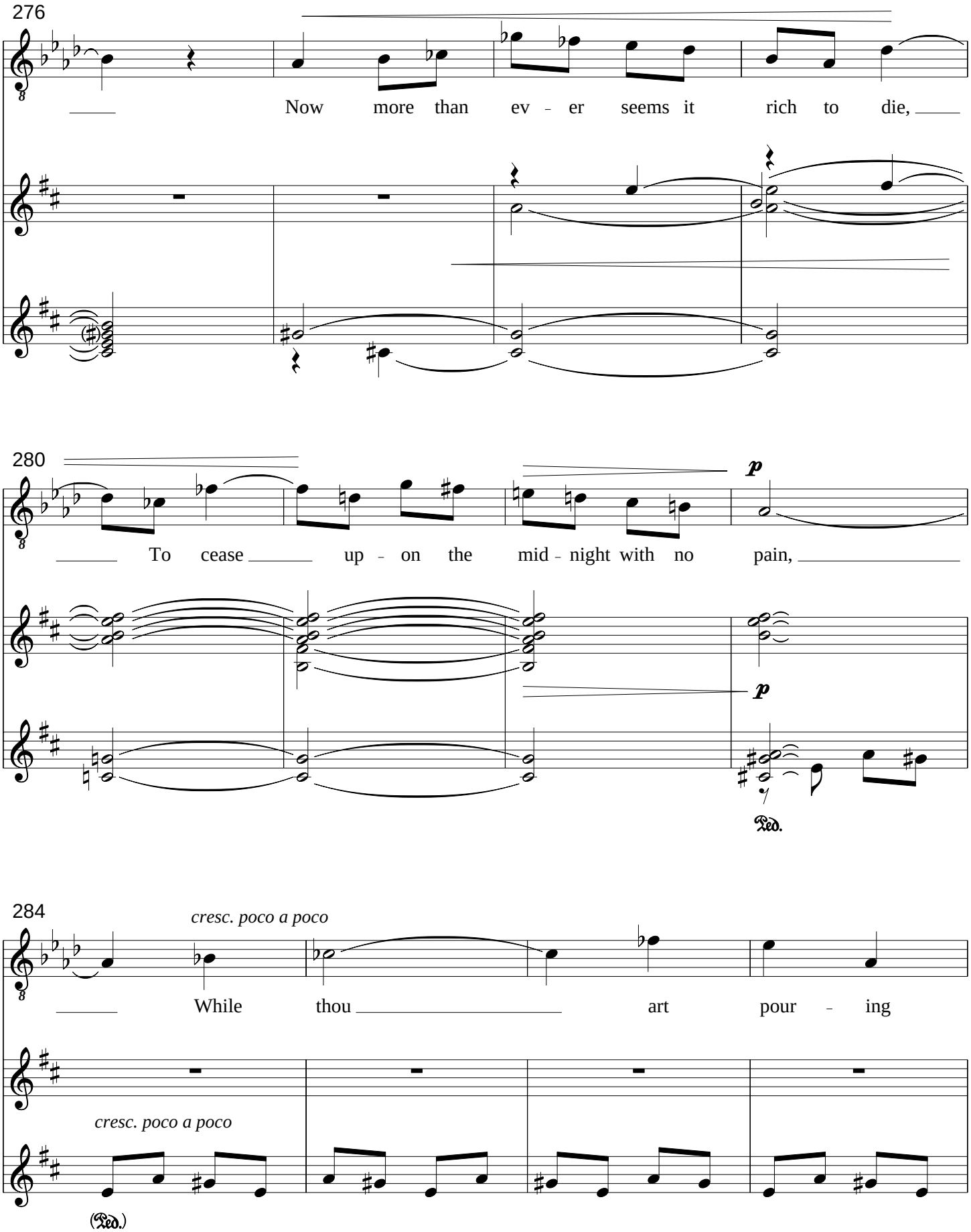

215
p
3
White haw - thorn, and the past - o - ral eg - lan - tine;
p
219
pp
ritard
A tempo
223
mp
Fast fad - ing vi - o - lets cov - er'd up in leaves;

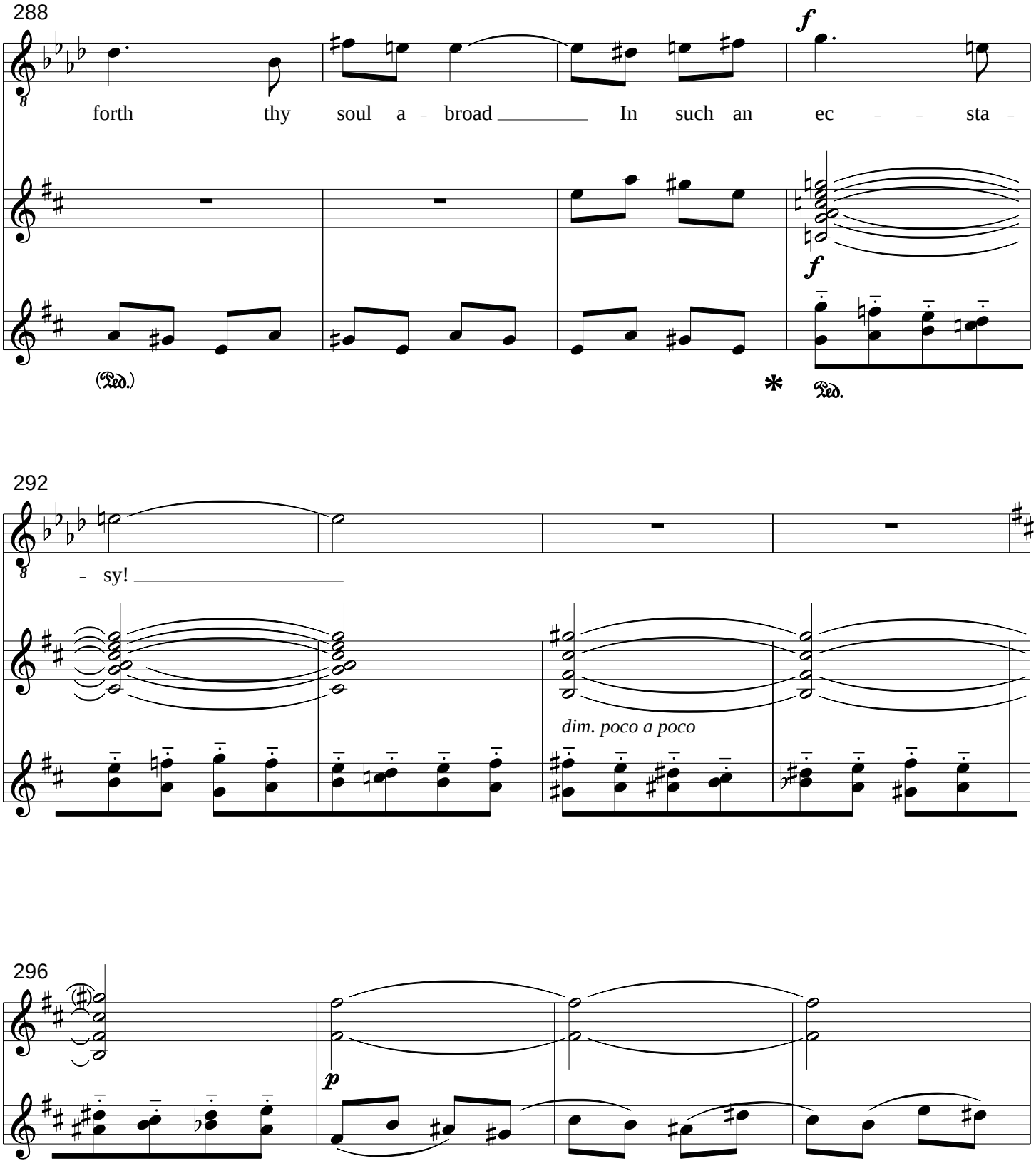

227
And mid - May's eld - est child, The com - ing musk - rose,
mp
230
full of dew - y wine,
233
ritard
pp
A tempo
The mur - mur - ous

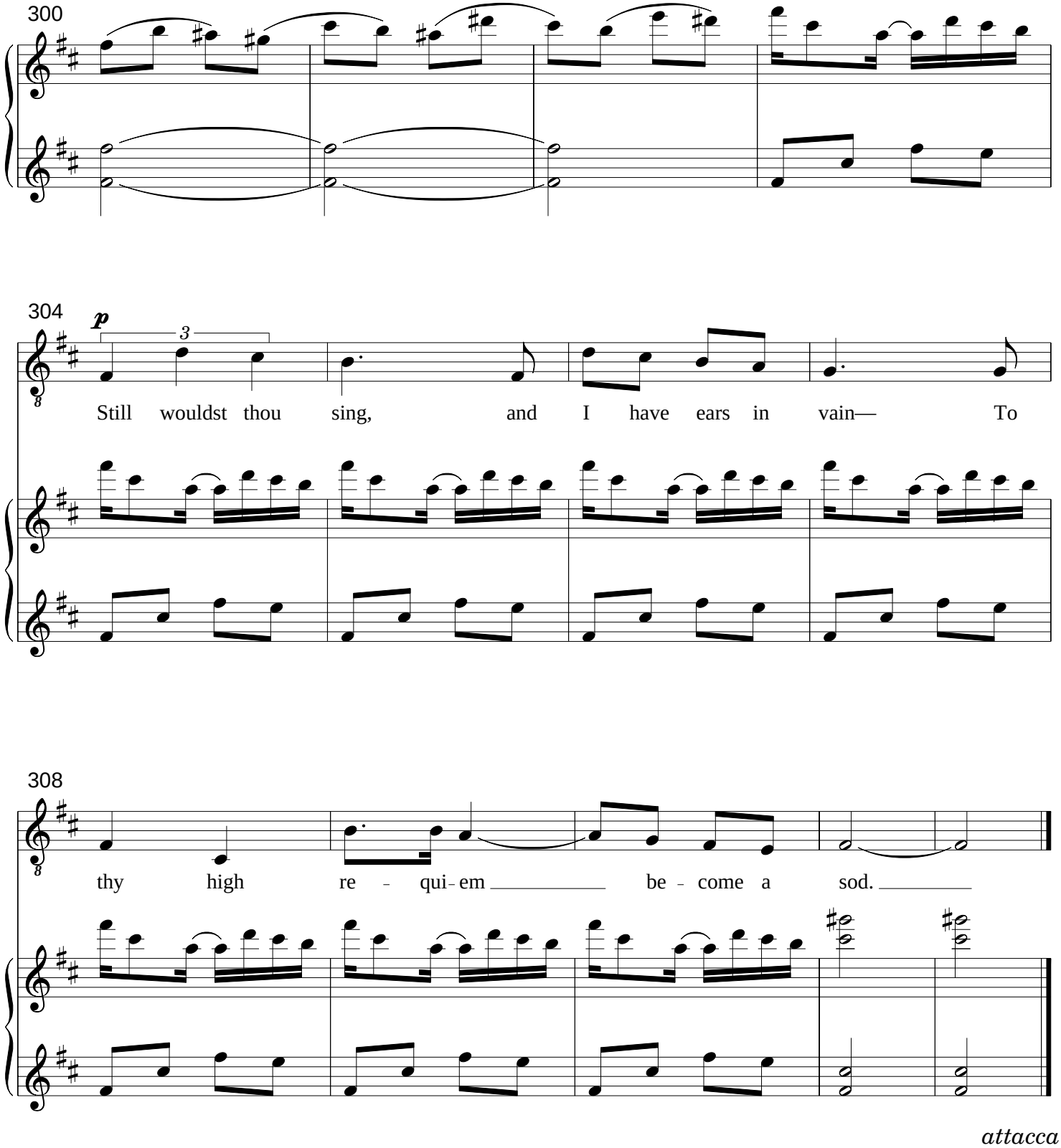

237
haunt of flies on sum - - mer
240
eves.
243
attacca


247
♩ = ca. 120
p cresc. poco a poco
250
8va
253
loco
8
ff
(loco)
6
6
6
6
256
♩ = ca. 69
mf
Dark - ling I lis - ten; and, for man - y a time I have
p
Ped.
*


261
been half in love with ease - ful Death,
266
Call'd him soft names in man-y a mus - ed rhyme, To
271
take in - to the air my qui - et breath;


276
Now more than ev - er seems it rich to die,
280
To cease up - on the mid - night with no pain,
p
p
Ped.
284
cresc. poco a poco
While thou art pour - ing
cresc. poco a poco
(Ped.)


288
forth thy soul a - broad In such an ec - - sta -
f
f
(Ped.)
*
Ped.
292
- sy!
dim. poco a poco
296
p


300
304
p
3
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain— To
308
thy high re - qui- em be - come a sod.
attacca

VII.

(earings, golden)

313 **Rubato – senza misura colla voce**

mf

Thou wast not born for death, im-mor-tal Bird! No hun-gry gen-er-a-tions tread thee down;

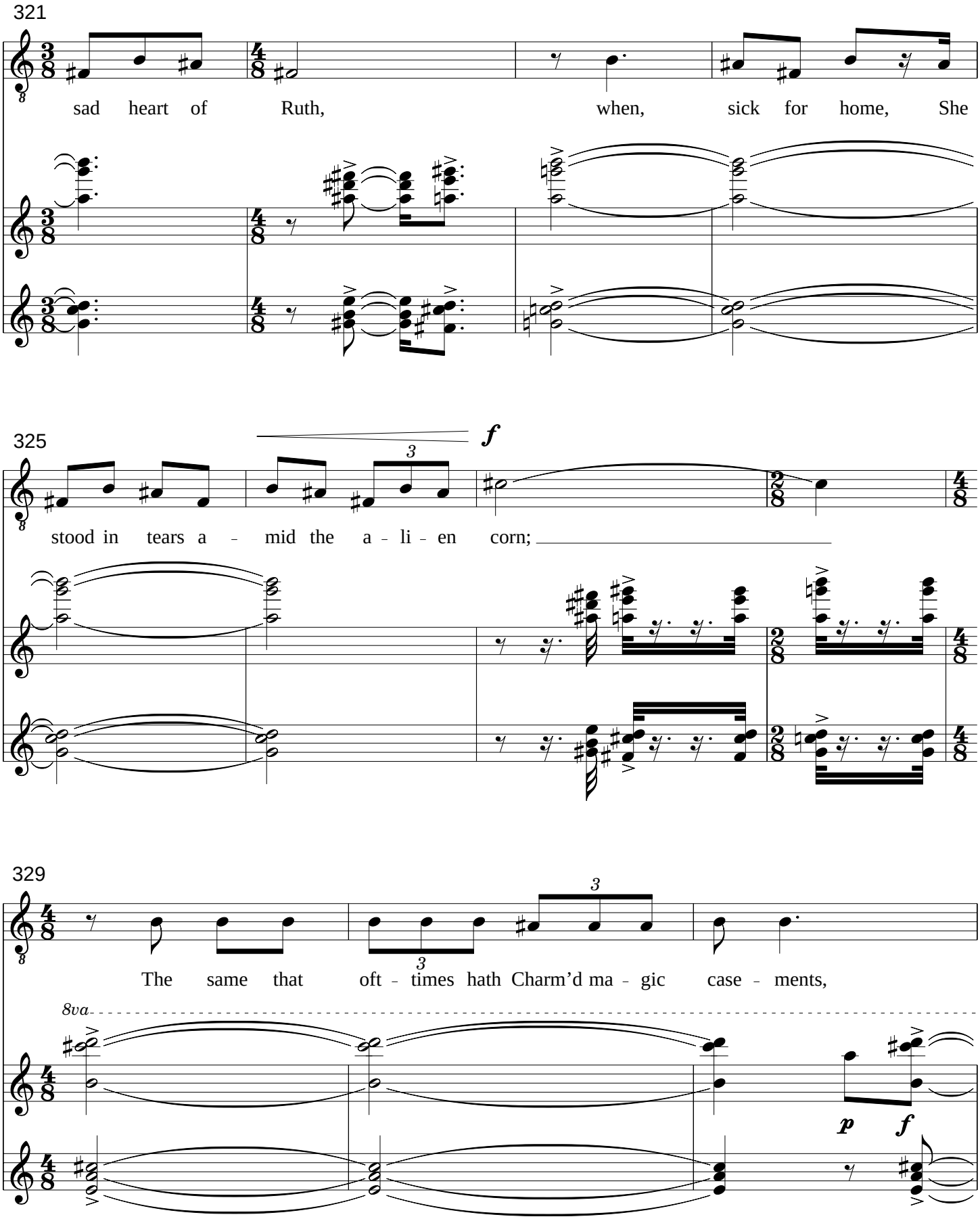
f

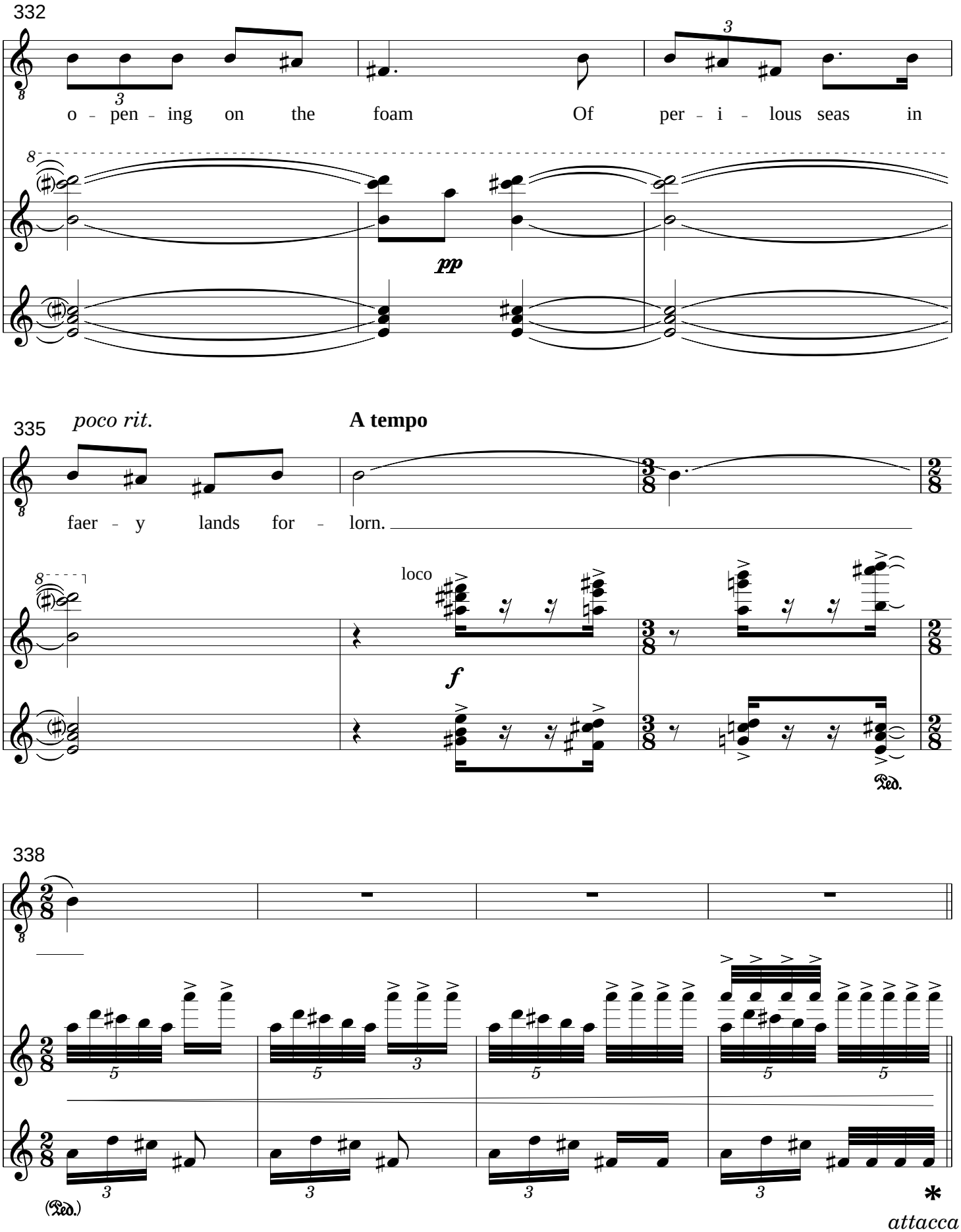
315

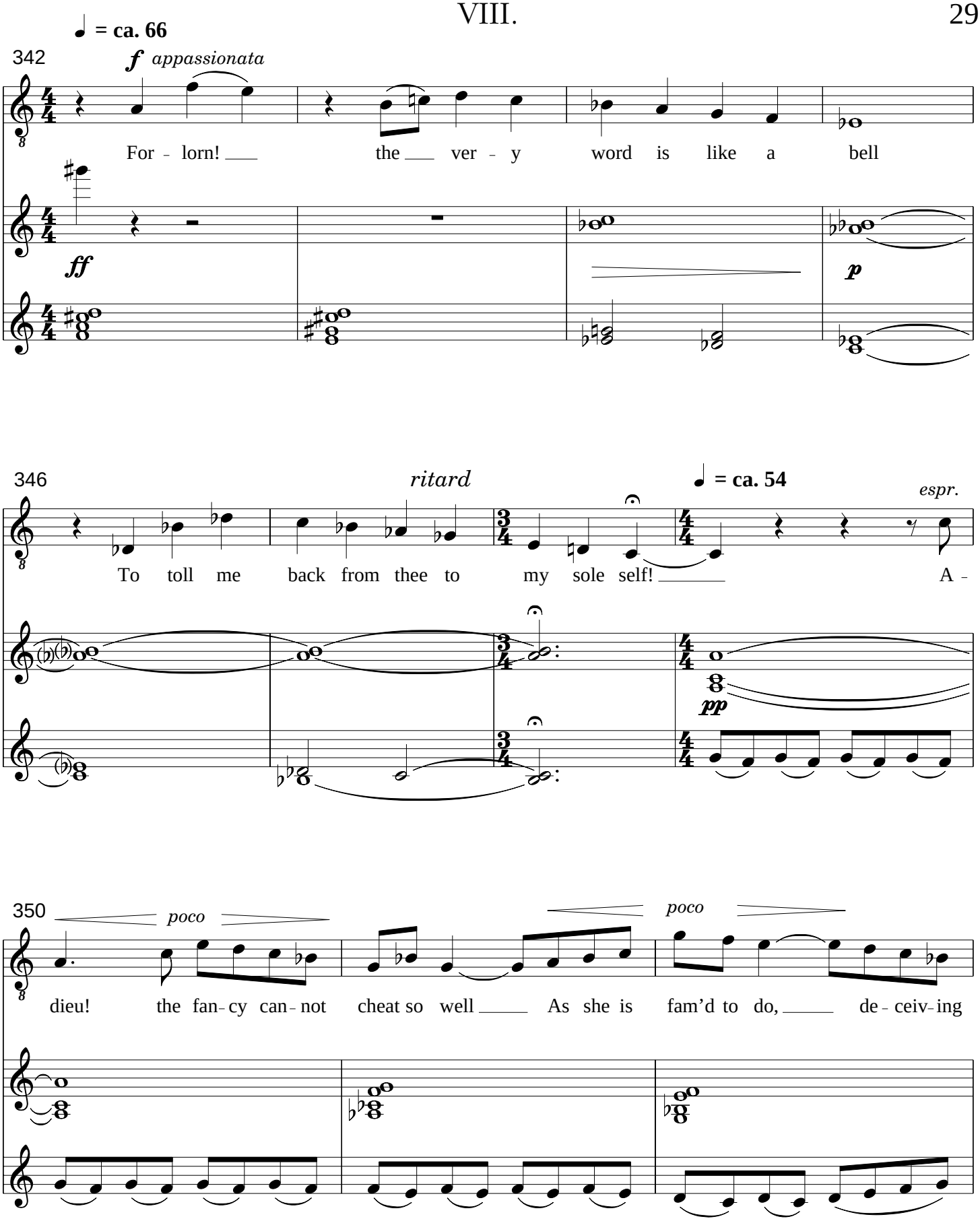
The voice I hear this pass-ing night was heard In an-cient days by em-per-or and clown:

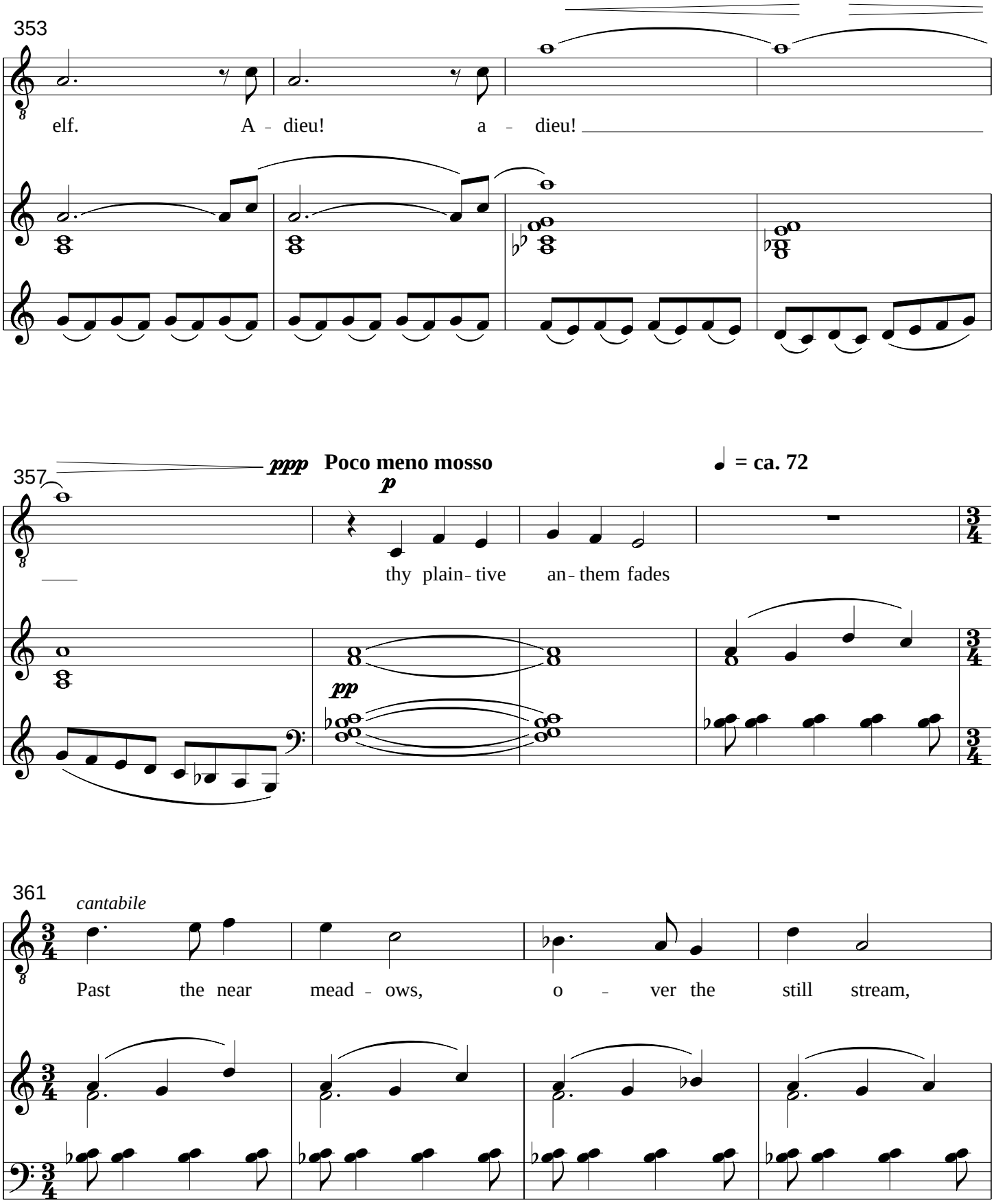
317 ♩ = **ca. 60**

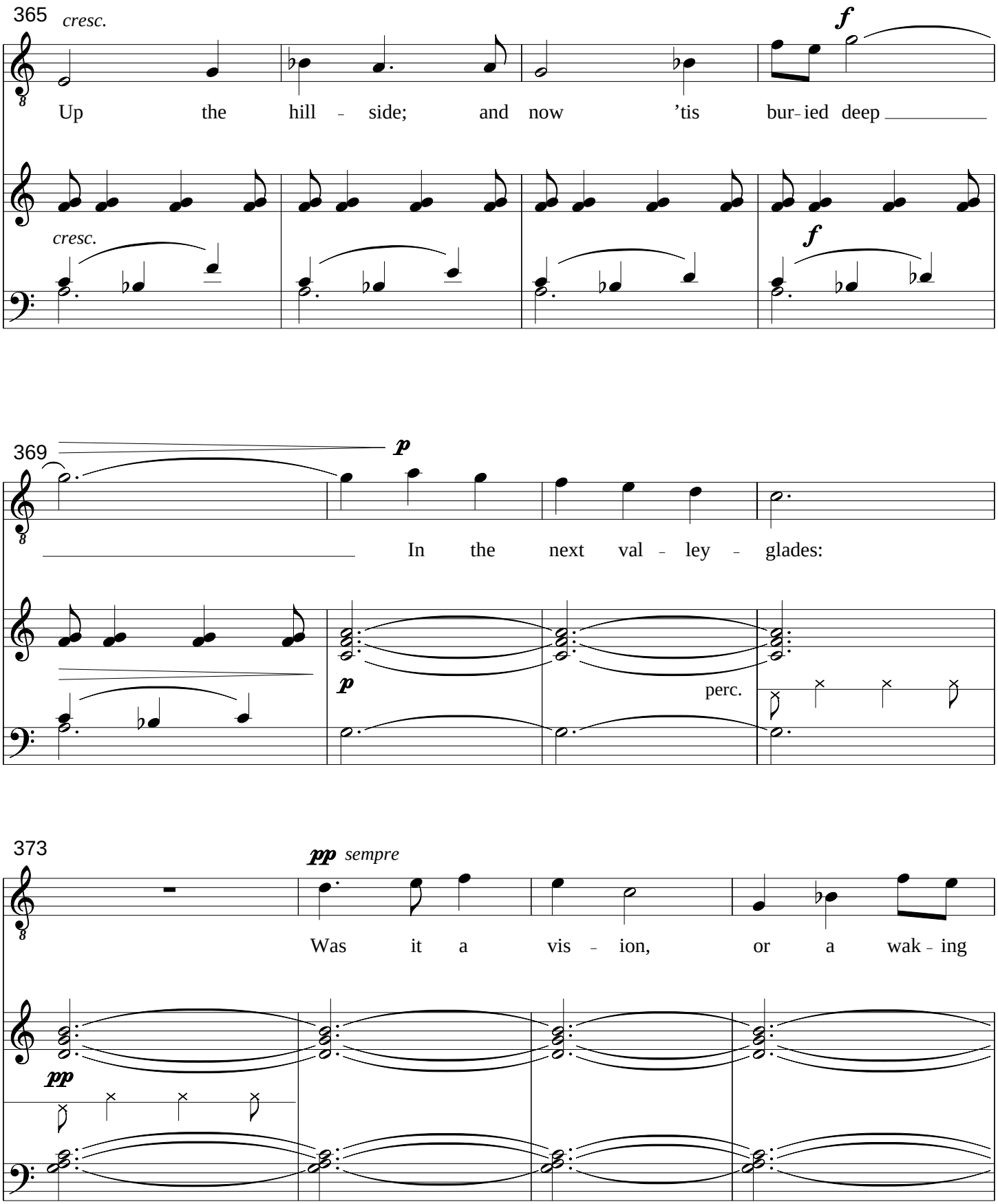
Per - haps the self - same song that found a path Through the

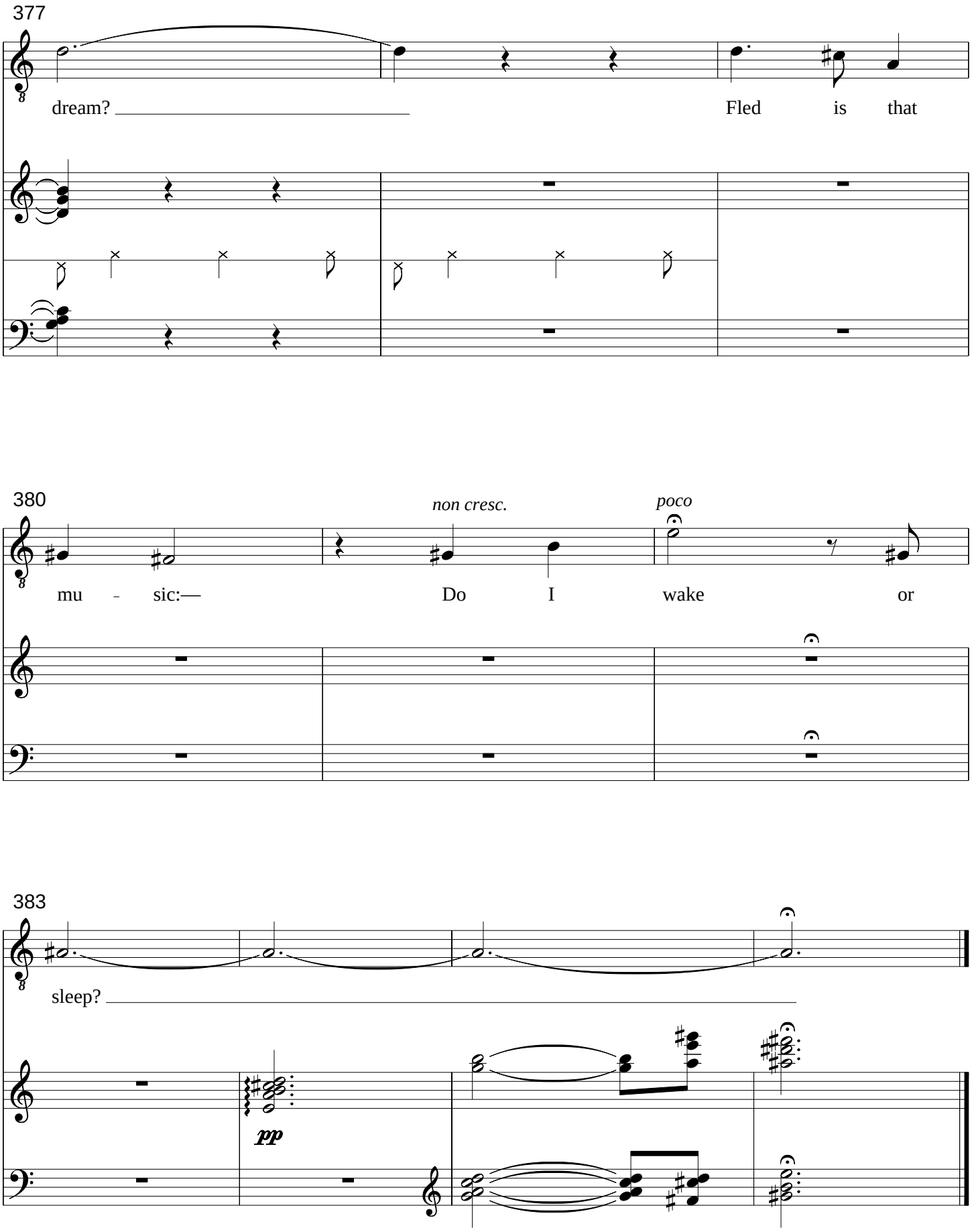

321
sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home, She
325
f
3
stood in tears a - mid the a - li - en corn;
329
3
3
The same that oft - times hath Charm'd ma - gic case - ments,
8va
p
f


332
o - pen - ing on the foam Of per - i - lous seas in
pp
335
poco rit.
A tempo
faer - y lands for - lorn.
loco
f
Ped.
338
(Ped.)
attacca


♩ = ca. 66
342
f appassionata
For - lorn! the very word is like a bell
ff
p
346
ritard
♩ = ca. 54
espr.
To toll me back from thee to my sole self! A -
pp
350
poco
poco
dieu! the fan-cy can-not cheat so well As she is fam'd to do, de-ceiv-ing


353
elf. A - dieu! a - dieu!
357
ppp
Poco meno mosso
p
= ca. 72
thy plain - tive an - them fades
pp
361
cantabile
Past the near mead - ows, o - ver the still stream,


365
cresc.
f
Up the hill - side; and now 'tis bur-ied deep
cresc.
f
369
p
In the next val - ley - glades:
p
perc.
373
pp sempre
Was it a vis - ion, or a wak - ing
pp


377
dream?
Fled is that
380
non cresc.
poco
mu - sic:—
Do I wake or
383
sleep?
pp