lansing mcloskey

sudden music

four songs for soprano and piano
texts by javen tanner

Odhecaton Z Music

lansing mcloskey

commissioned by
mormon artists group

sudden music

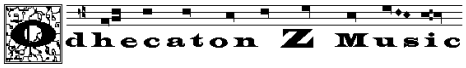
soprano and piano

P E R F O R M A N C E N O T E S :

Accidentals apply to the octave in which they appear and hold throughout the measure, though in highly chromatic passages courtesy accidentals are given.

♩ = ♩ at all meter changes unless otherwise indicated.

Approximate duration: 16 minutes



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Sudden Music

1.
Look at the generous spread of stars before us,
the sporadic fire of the past, the larger shadow beyond.
Look at the throw of juniper burning into nothing,

the chipped bricks, the warped wood,
the shingles bleached under a heavy moon.
Listen to the names whispered into pillows,

names we loved or never knew we loved,
names that dripped from the corners of our lips as we slept.
Listen in darkness to the sudden music of loss.

2.
Let desire escape and rise as smoke from the burning cedar.
Watch it lift into the mute density of winter
and rub itself on the black layer

that separates voice from sound, breath from prayer—
smoke blurring the outline of the body
with the stillness that ensues;

smoke continuing through the nakedness
of branches, to hover in the valley,
to thin with the smoke of other desires.

3.
Consider the snow and its slow work,
dressing dead orchards, dulling our sense of what was
until we can no longer say with conviction,

"They were apple trees, it was summer."
Consider this and be content with winter: the cool wisdom
blown across the ear, the patches of bloodless grass.

Because if memory is anything it is dirty banks of snow
or rancid ice decaying into water. And what remains
is suspect at best. It will not be able to comfort us.

4.
Look at the frost growing its white mold
on the window, clouding the periphery, focusing
our attention on that which escapes us—

on that which has always escaped us. Let it go.
Let go of the fire, the shadow, the disappearing smoke.
Let go of names dried as stains on our pillows.

Fall a little, flinch and settle into dreams just under
the surface of sleep. Listen to the muffled voices above.
They sing, "Please, please," but from here it sounds like "peace."

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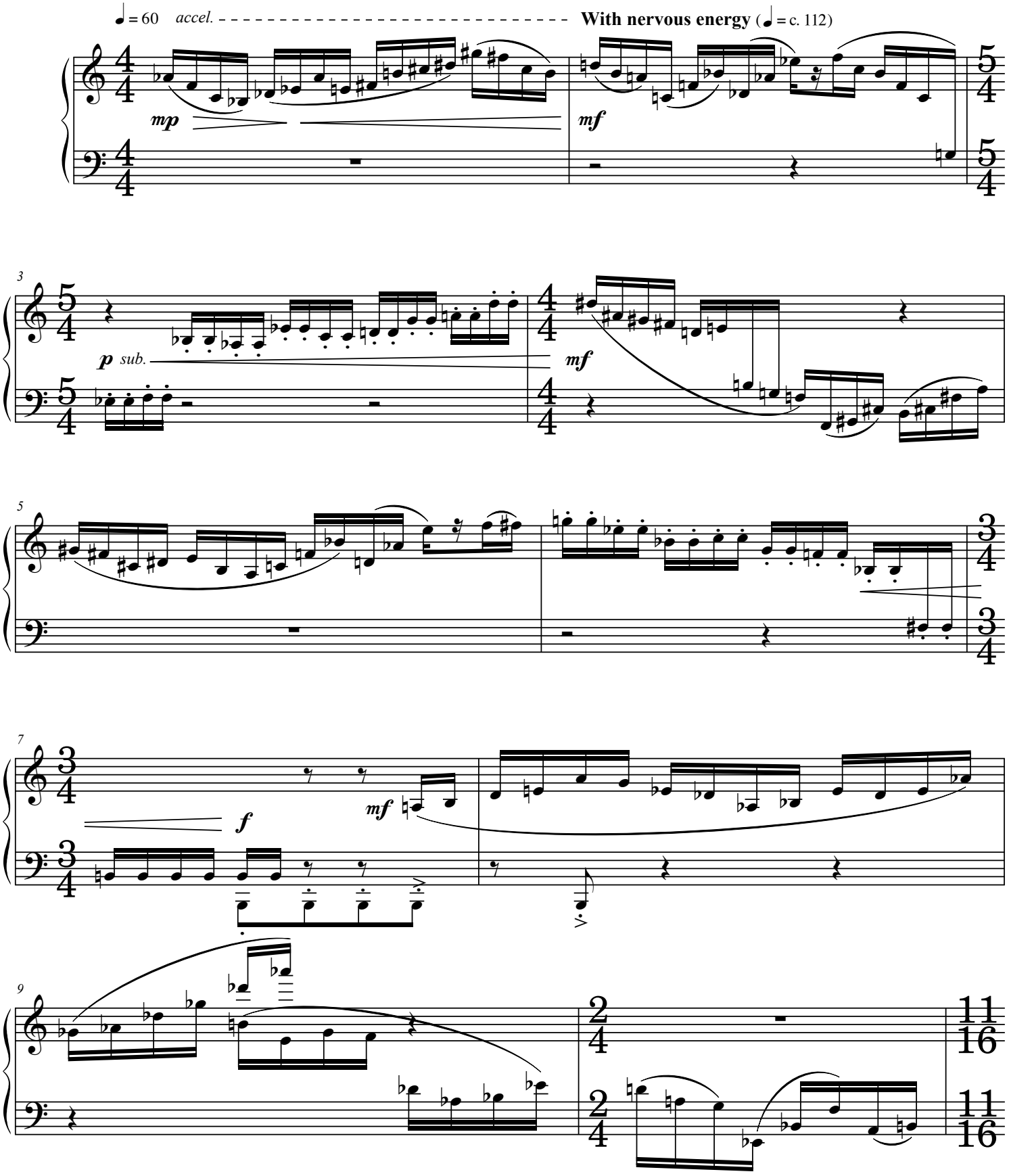
Sudden Music

1.

Lansing McLoskey
text by Javen Tanner



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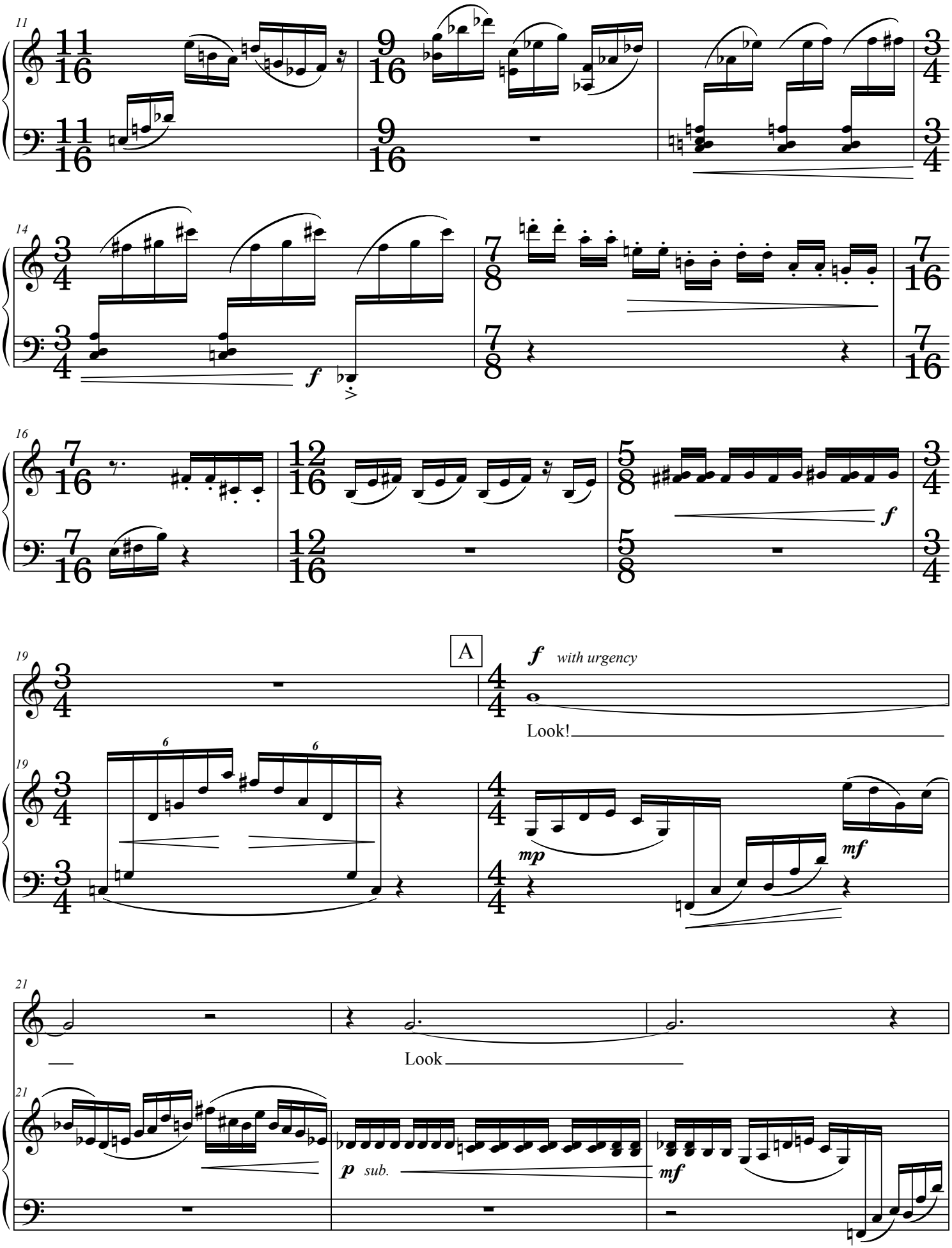
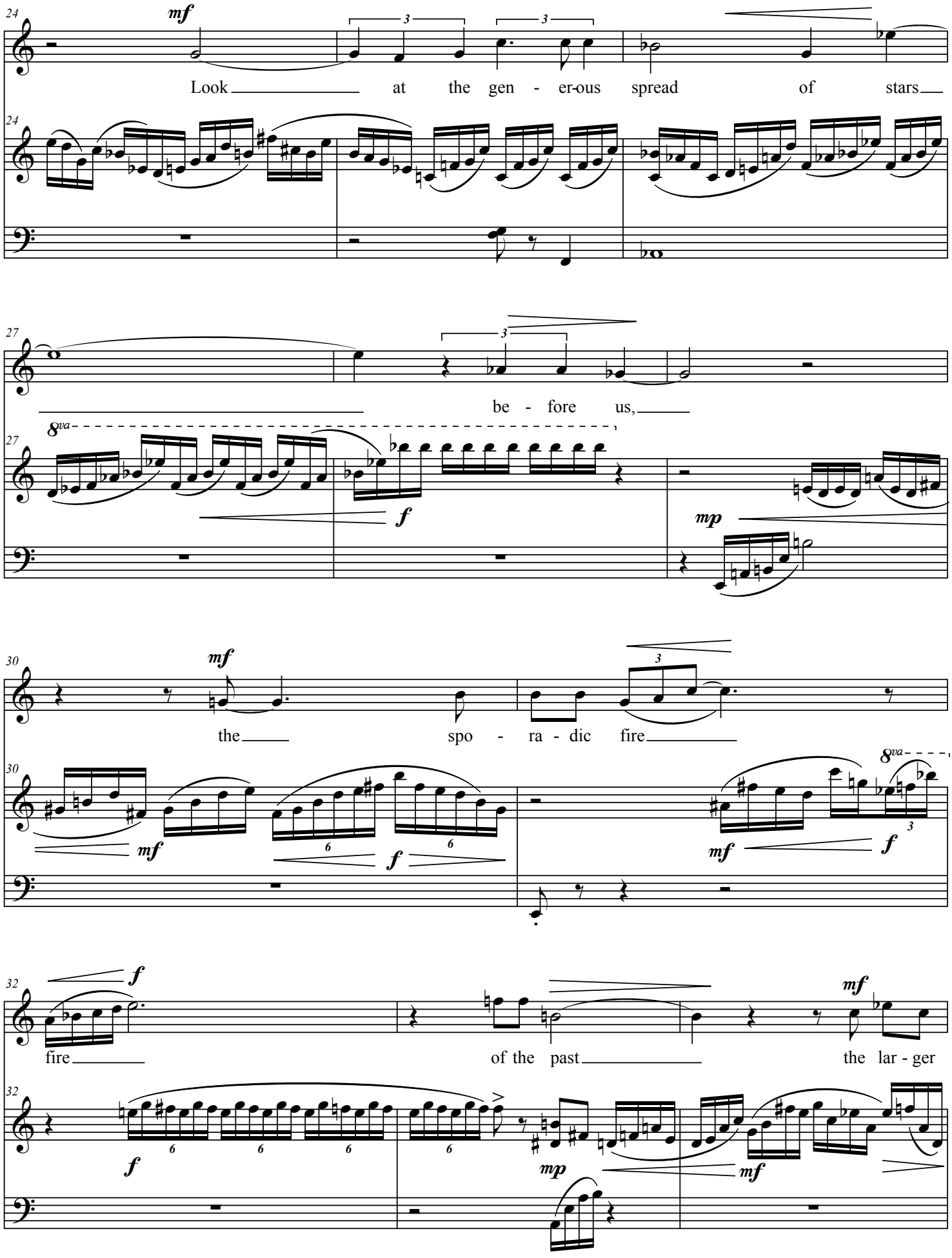
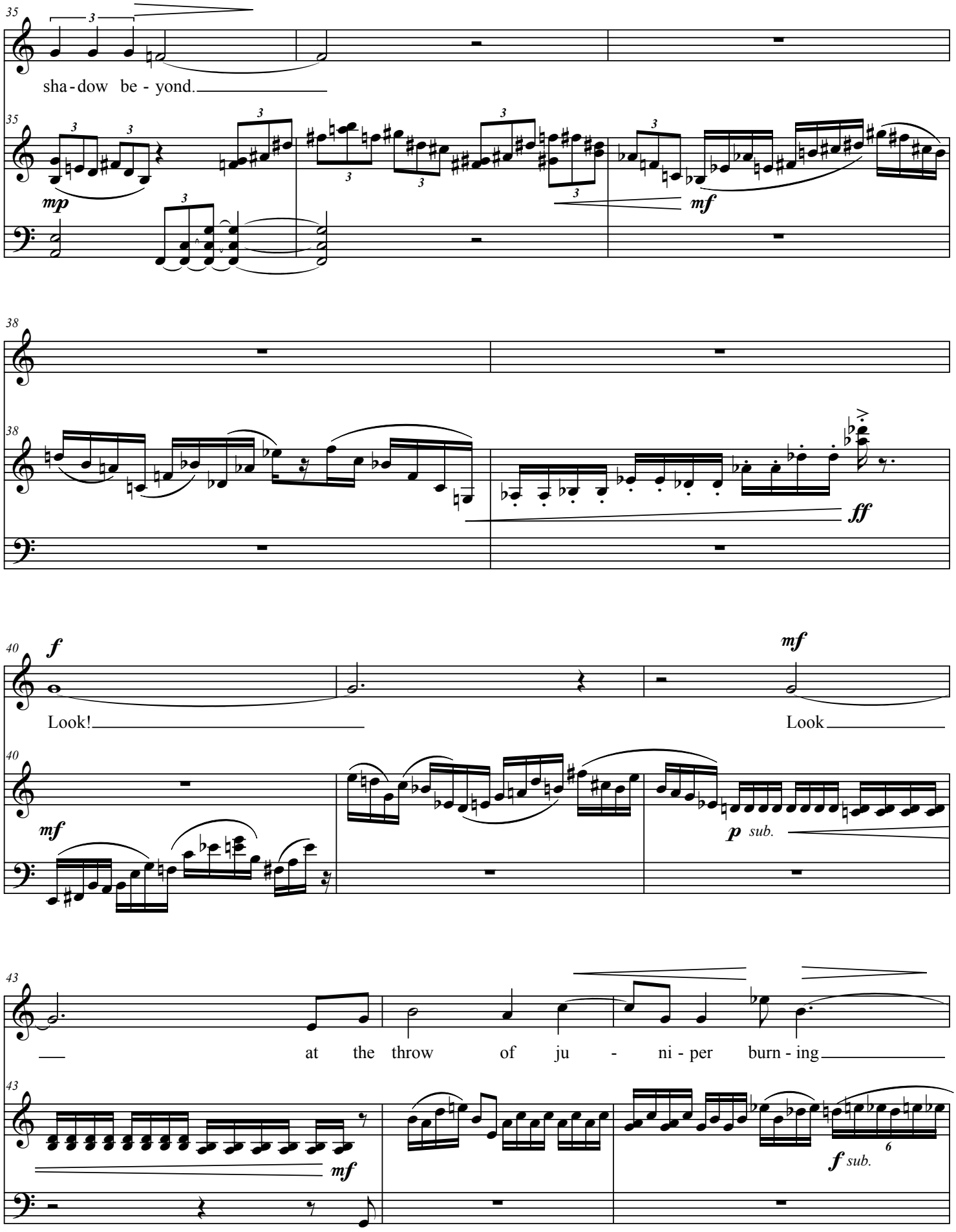
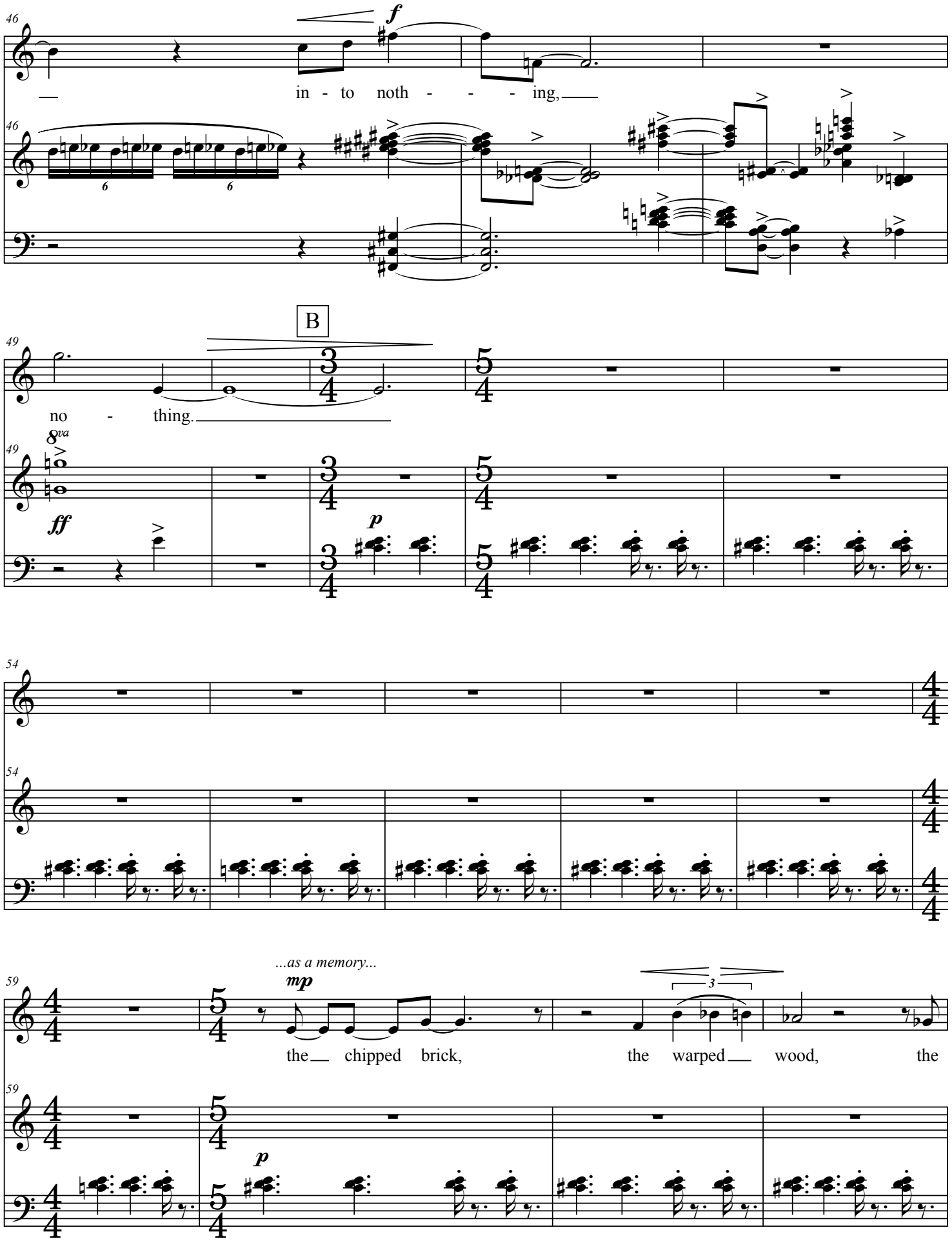
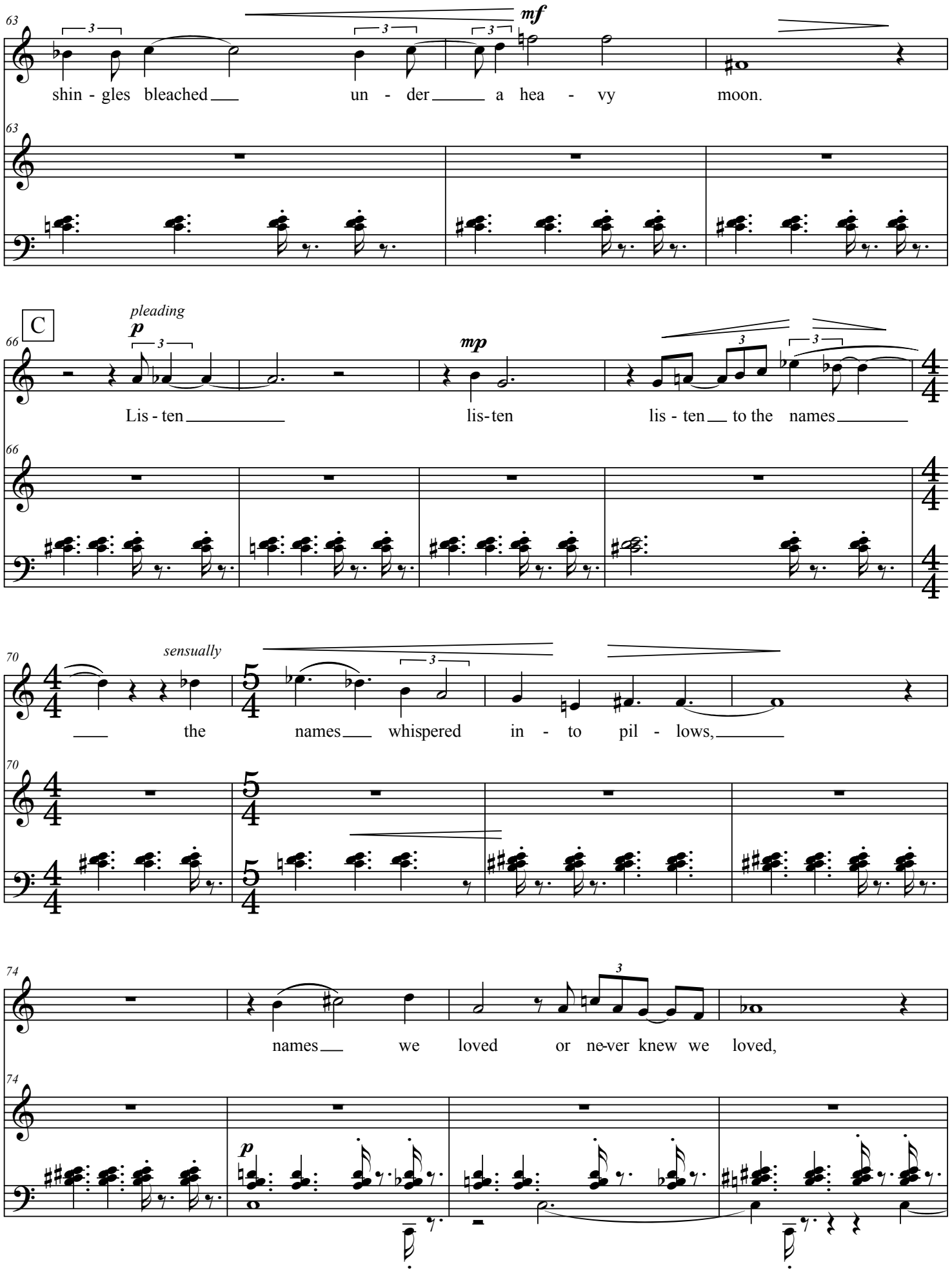
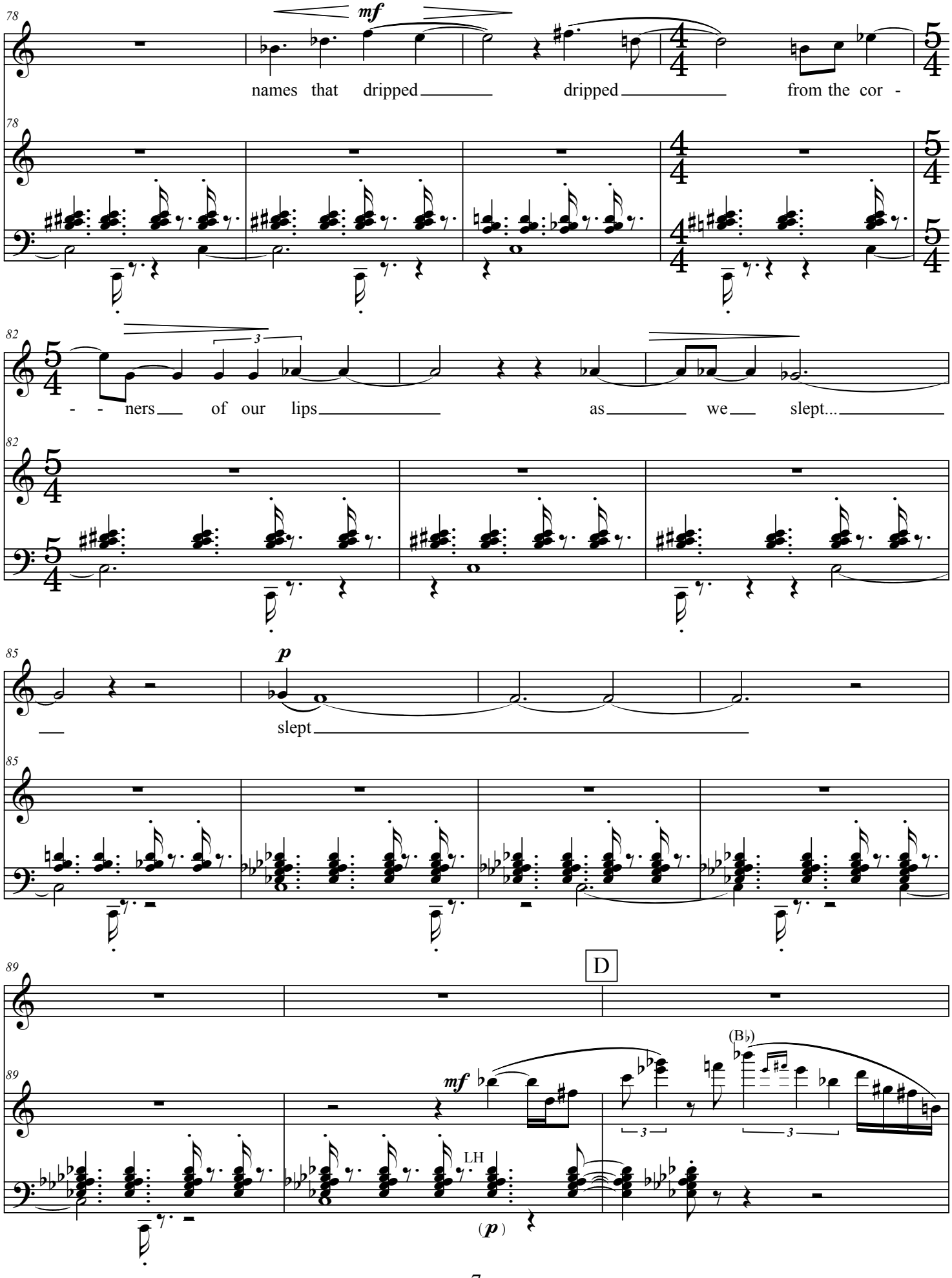

11
14
f
16
f
19
A
f with urgency
Look!
19
mp
mf
21
Look
21
p sub.
mf

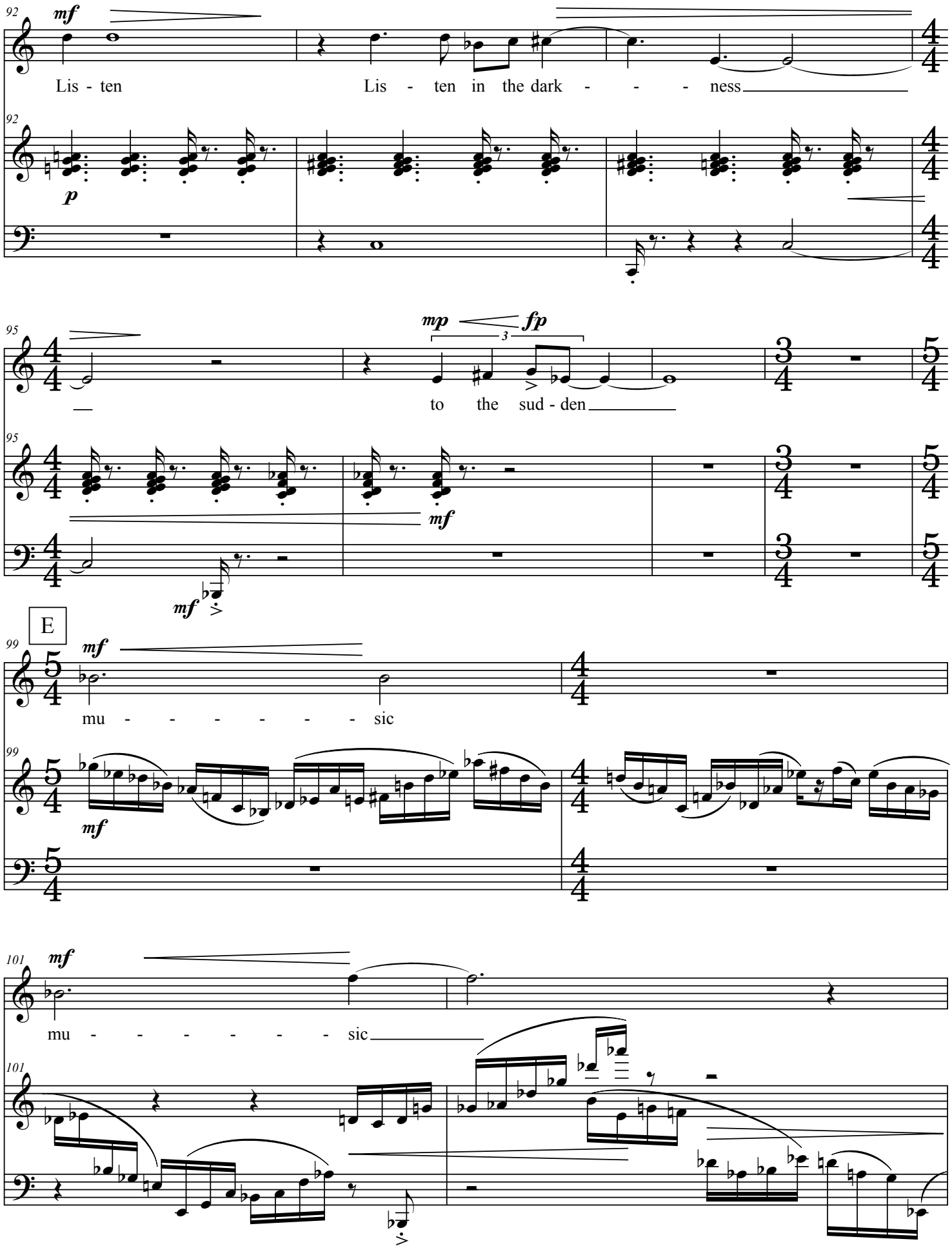

24
mf
Look at the gen - er-ous spread of stars
24
27
be - fore us,
27
8va
f
mp
30
mf
the spo - ra - dic fire
30
mf
f
8va
mf
f
32
f
fire of the past
mf
the lar - ger
32
f
mp
mf

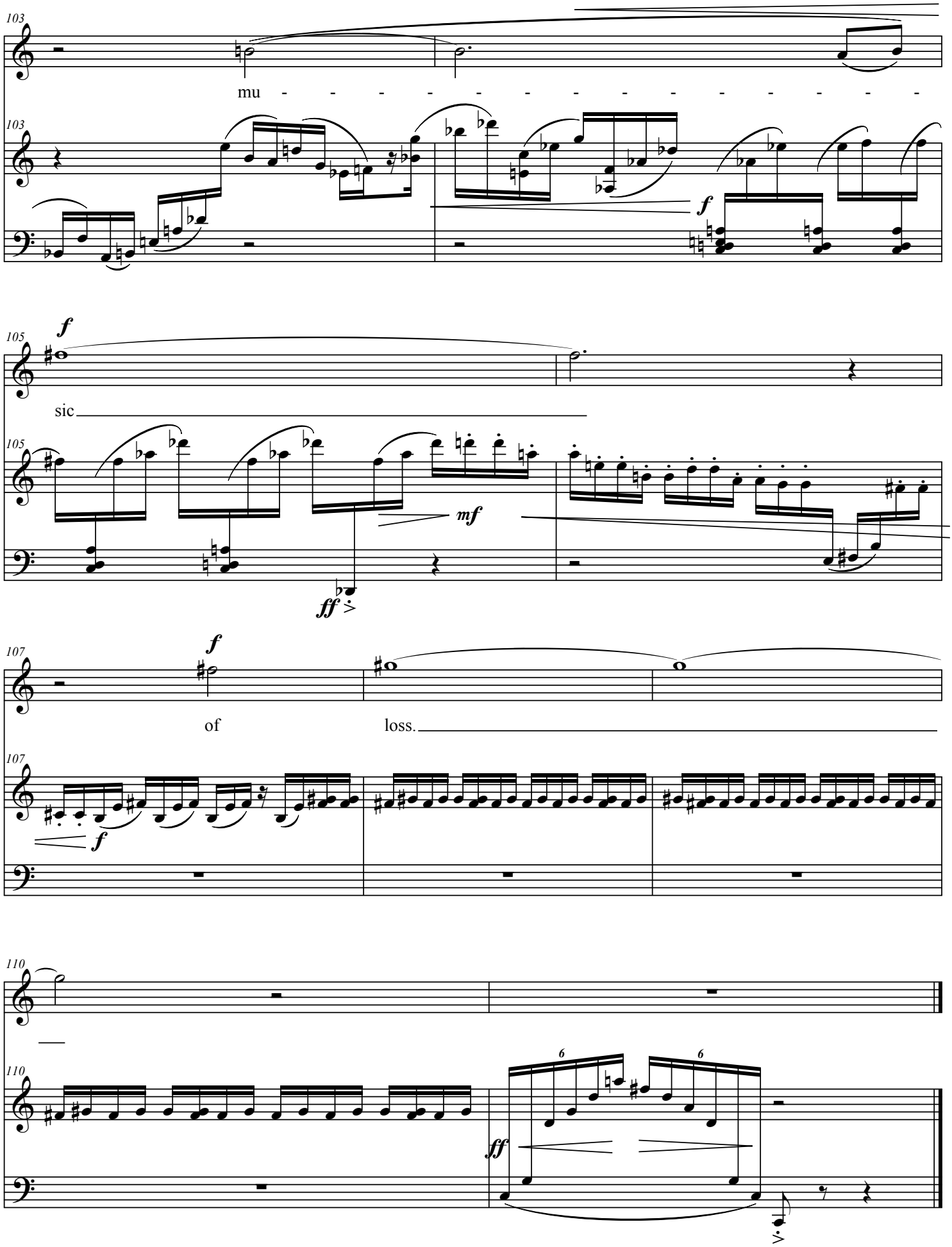

35
sha - dow be - yond.
mp
mf
38
ff
40
f
Look!
mf
Look
mf
p sub.
43
at the throw of ju - ni - per burn - ing
mf
f sub.


46
f
in - to noth - - - ing,
B
49
no - thing.
8va
ff
p
54
...as a memory...
59
mp
the chipped brick, the warped wood, the
3
p


63
mf
shin - gles bleached un - der a hea - vy moon.
C
pleading
p
66
mp
Lis - ten lis-ten lis - ten to the names
70
sensually
the names whispered in - to pil - lows,
74
names we loved or ne-ver knew we loved,
p


78
mf
names that dripped dripped from the cor -
78
82
- - ners of our lips as we slept...
82
85
p
slept
85
89
D
89
mf
(B♭)
LH
(p)


92
mf
Lis - ten
Lis - ten in the dark - - - - ness
p
95
mp
fp
3
to the sud - den
mf
mf
E
99
mf
mu - - - - - - - sic
mf
101
mf
mu - - - - - - - sic

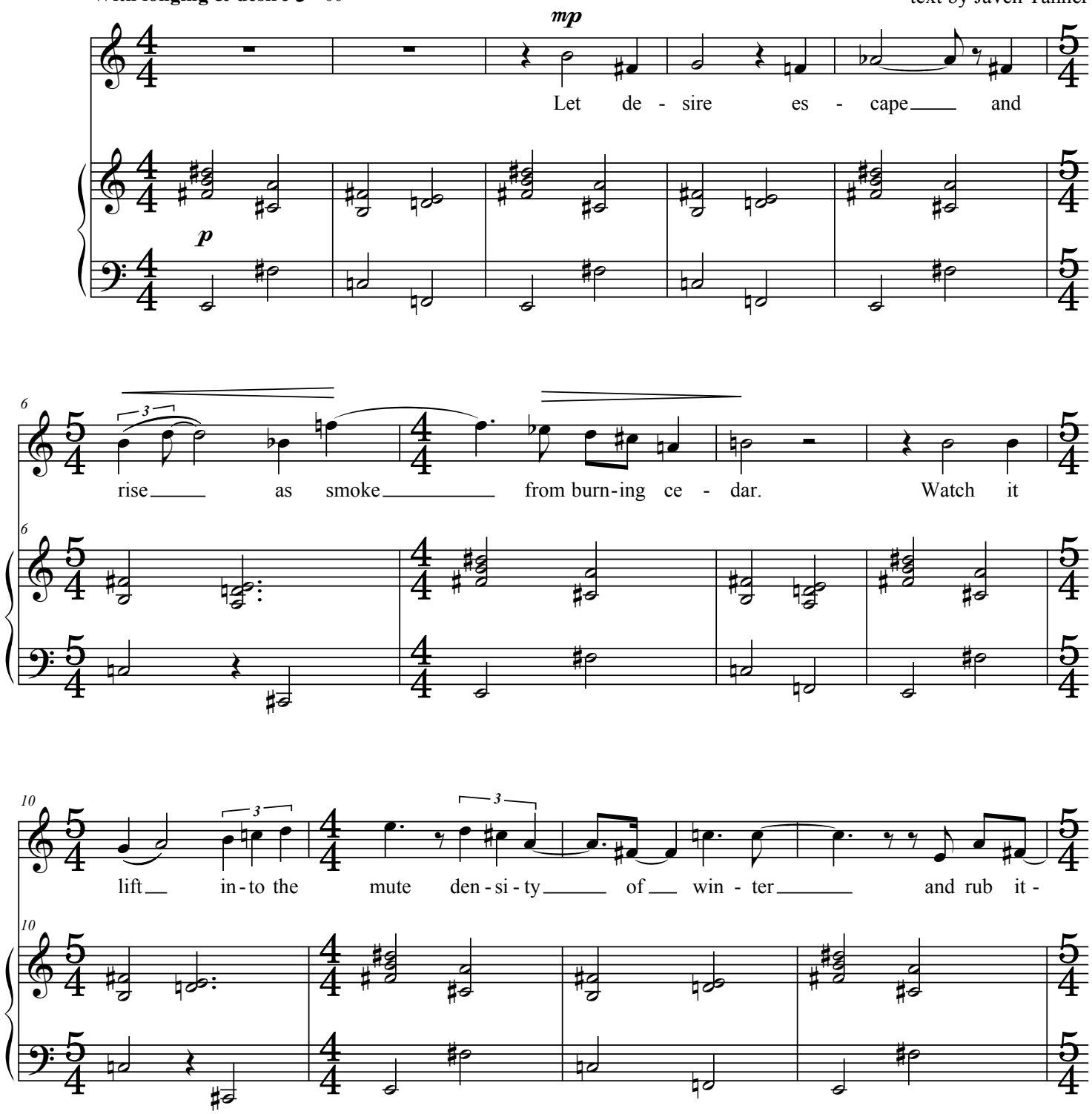

103
mu - - - - - - - - - - - - -
f
105
f
sic
mf
ff
107
f
of
loss.
f
110
6
6
ff

Sudden Music

2.

Lansing McLoskey
text by Javen Tanner

With longing & desire ♩ = 60



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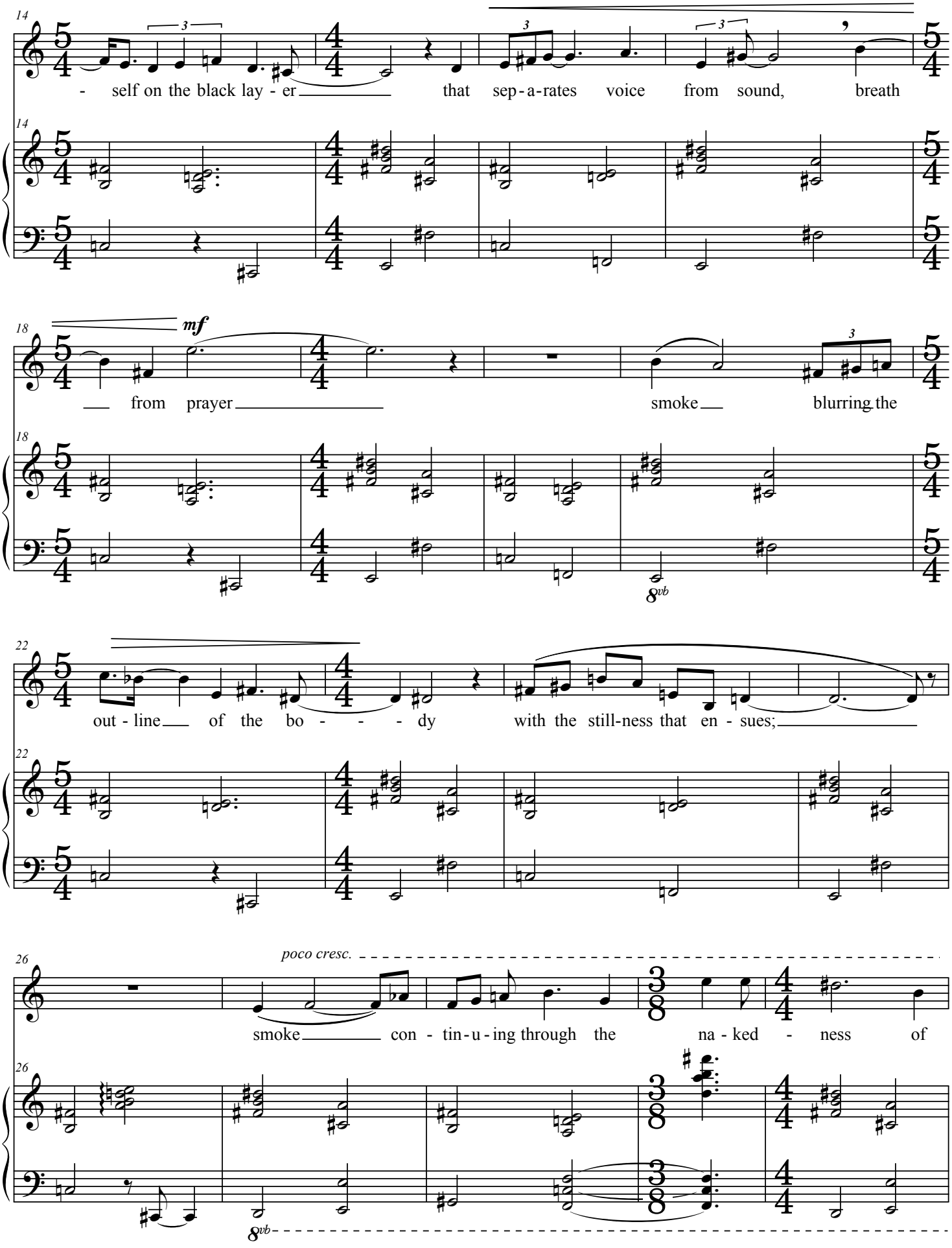
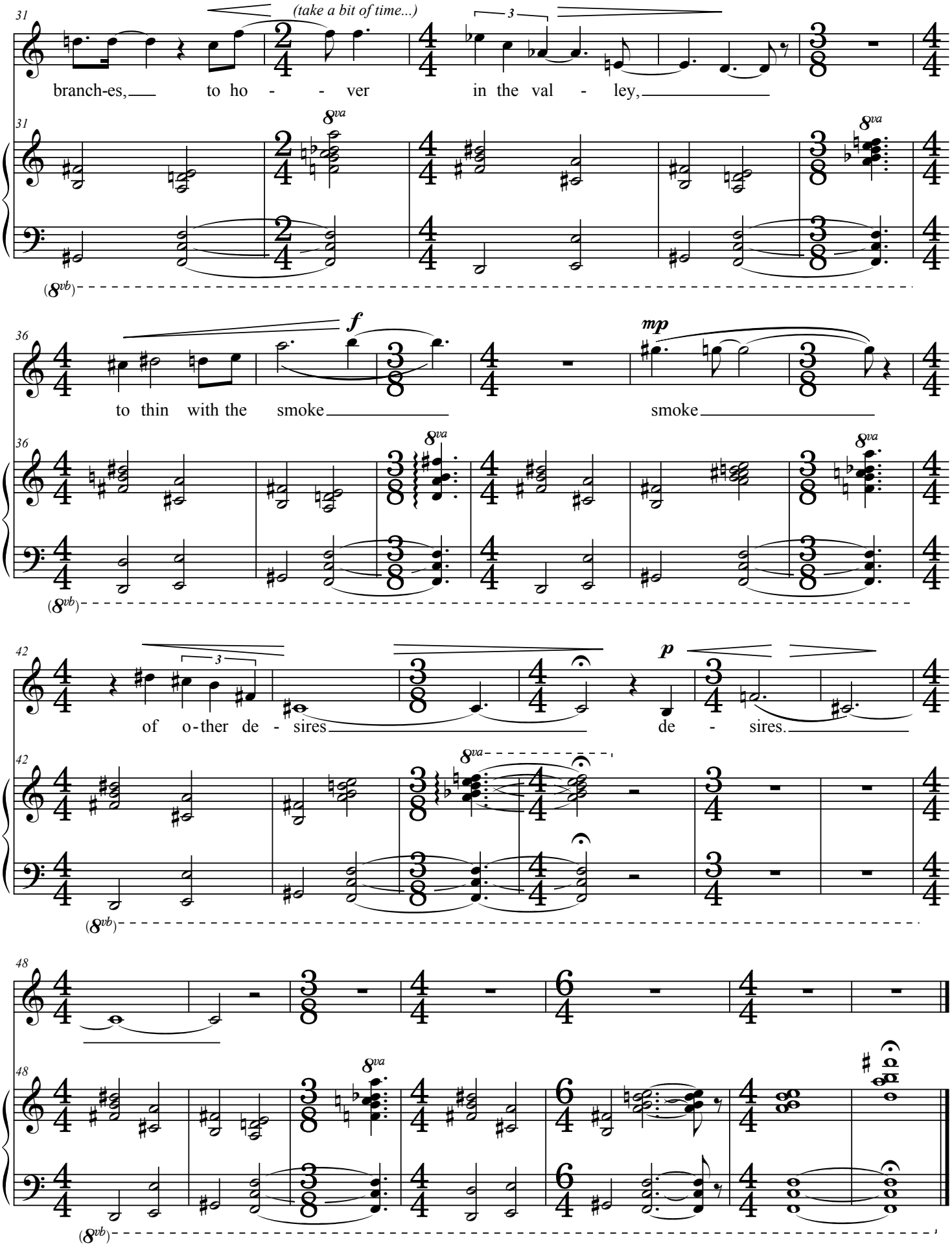
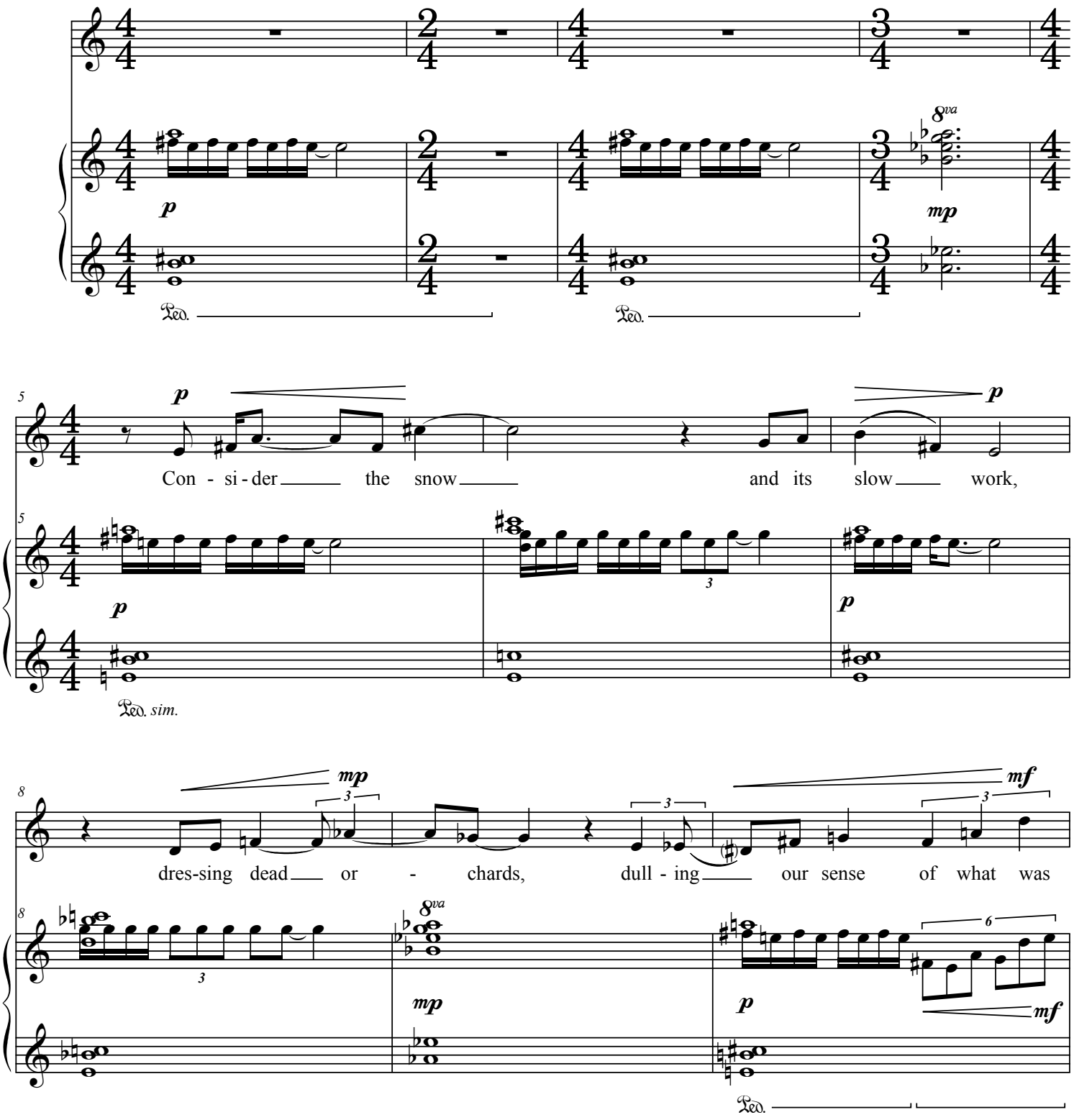

14
- self on the black lay - er that sep - a - rates voice from sound, breath
18
mf
from prayer smoke blurring the
8vb
22
out - line of the bo - - - - dy with the still-ness that en - sues;
26
poco cresc.
smoke con - tin - u - ing through the na - ked - ness of
8vb


31
(take a bit of time...)
3
branch-es, to ho - - ver in the val - ley,
8va
(8vb)
36
f
mp
to thin with the smoke smoke
42
3
of o-ther de - sires de - sires.
p
48

Sudden Music

3.

Lansing McLoskey
Text by Javen Tanner



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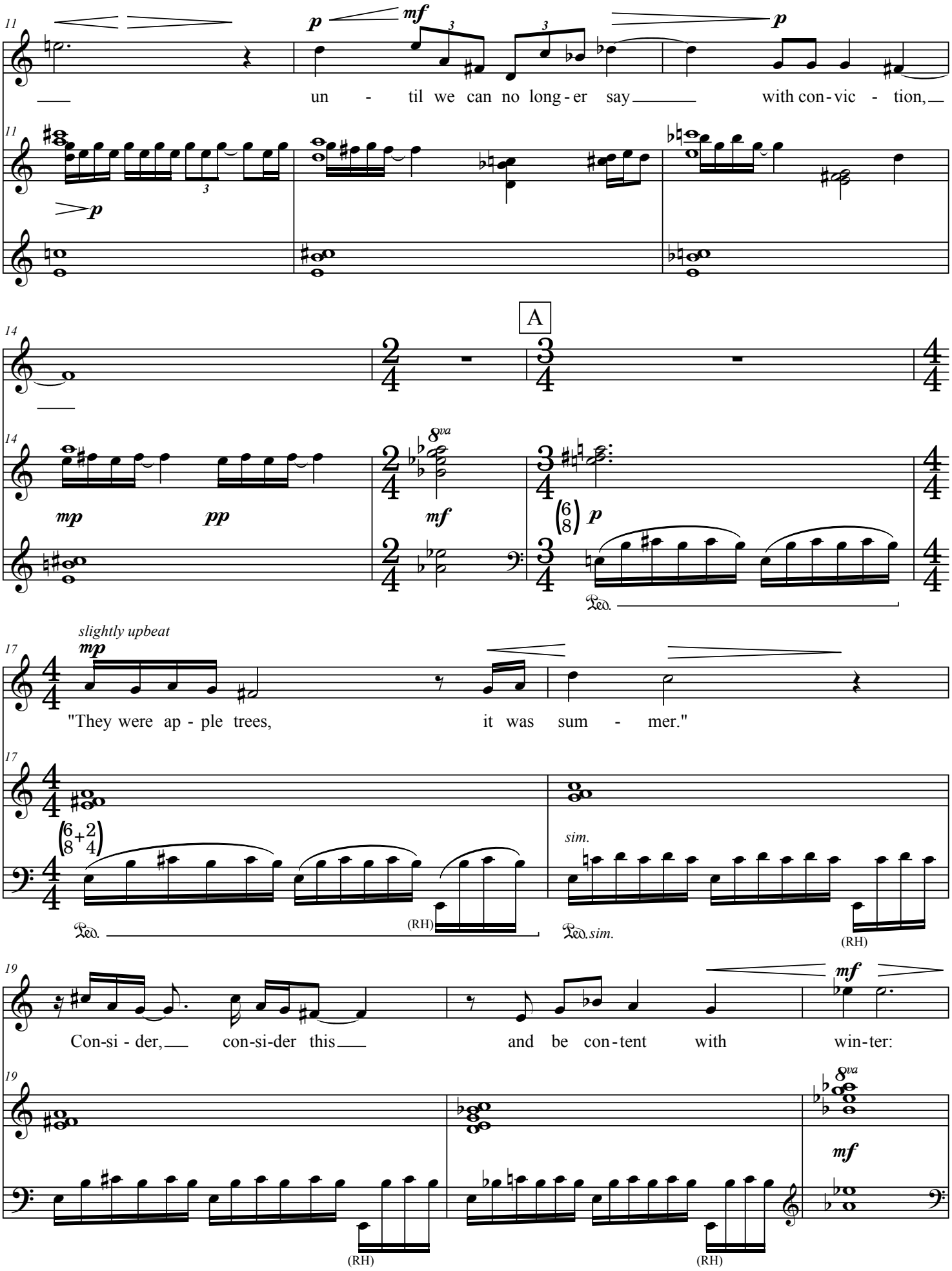
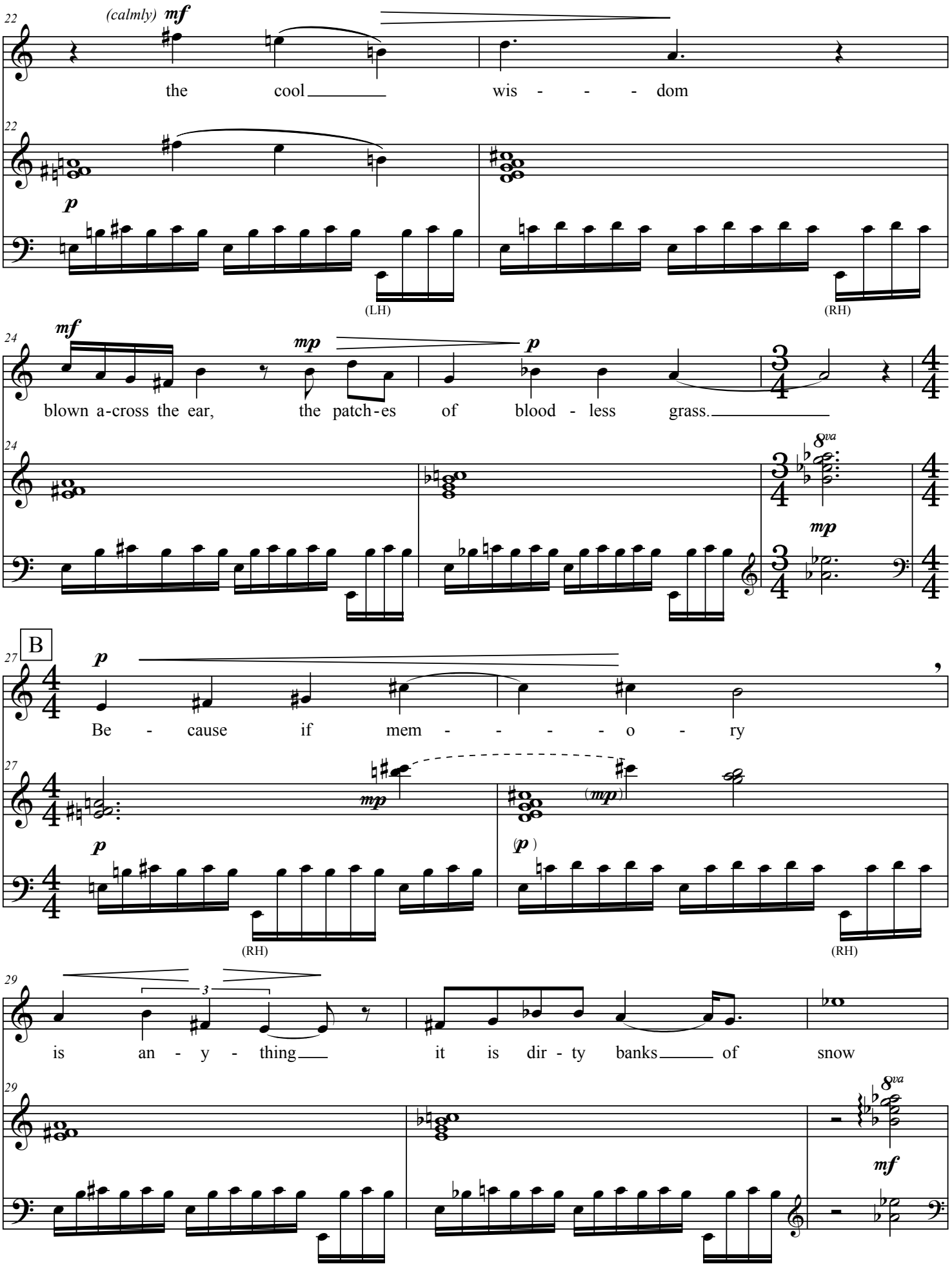
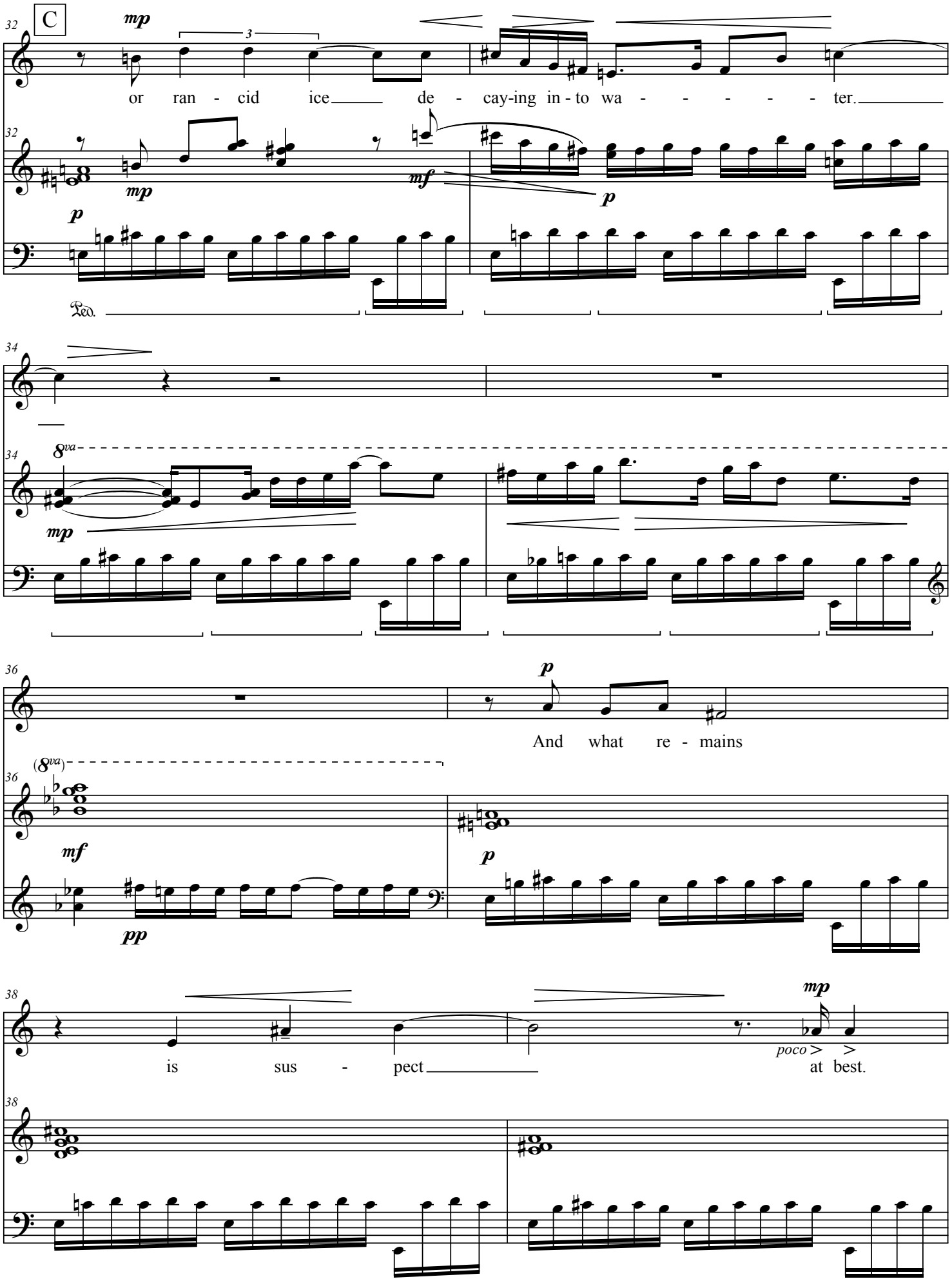
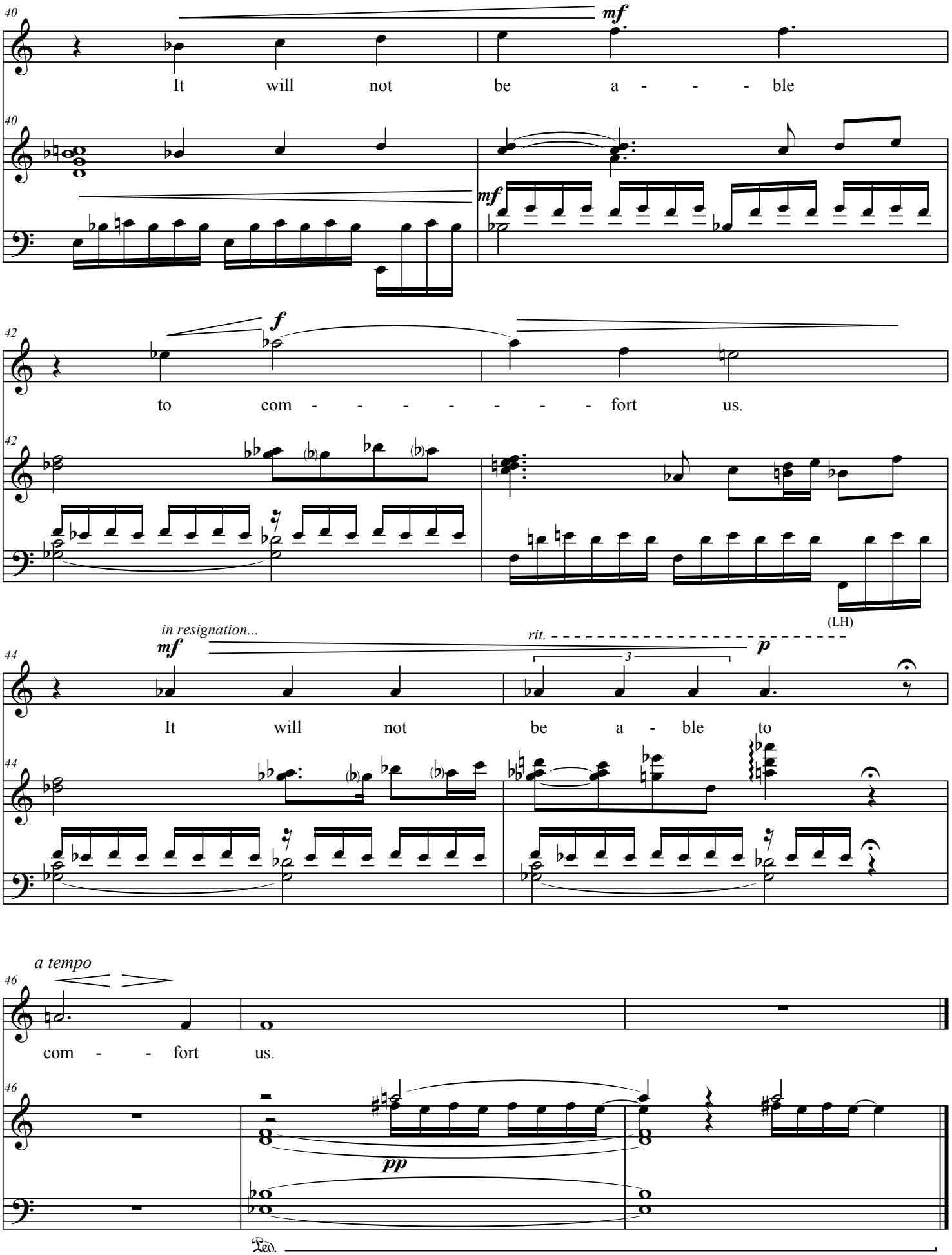

11
p
mf
p
un - til we can no long-er say with con-vic - tion,
p
14
A
mp
pp
8va
mf
p
Ped.
slightly upbeat
17
mp
"They were ap - ple trees, it was sum - mer."
(RH)
sim.
Ped. sim.
(RH)
19
Con-si - der, con-si-der this and be con-tent with win-ter:
mf
8va
mf
(RH)
(RH)


22
(calmly) mf
the cool wis - - - dom
p
(LH)
(RH)
24
mf
mp
p
blown a-cross the ear, the patch-es of blood - less grass.
8va
mp
B
27
p
Be - cause if mem - - - - o - ry
mp
(mp)
(p)
(RH)
(RH)
29
3
is an - y - thing it is dir - ty banks of snow
8va
mf

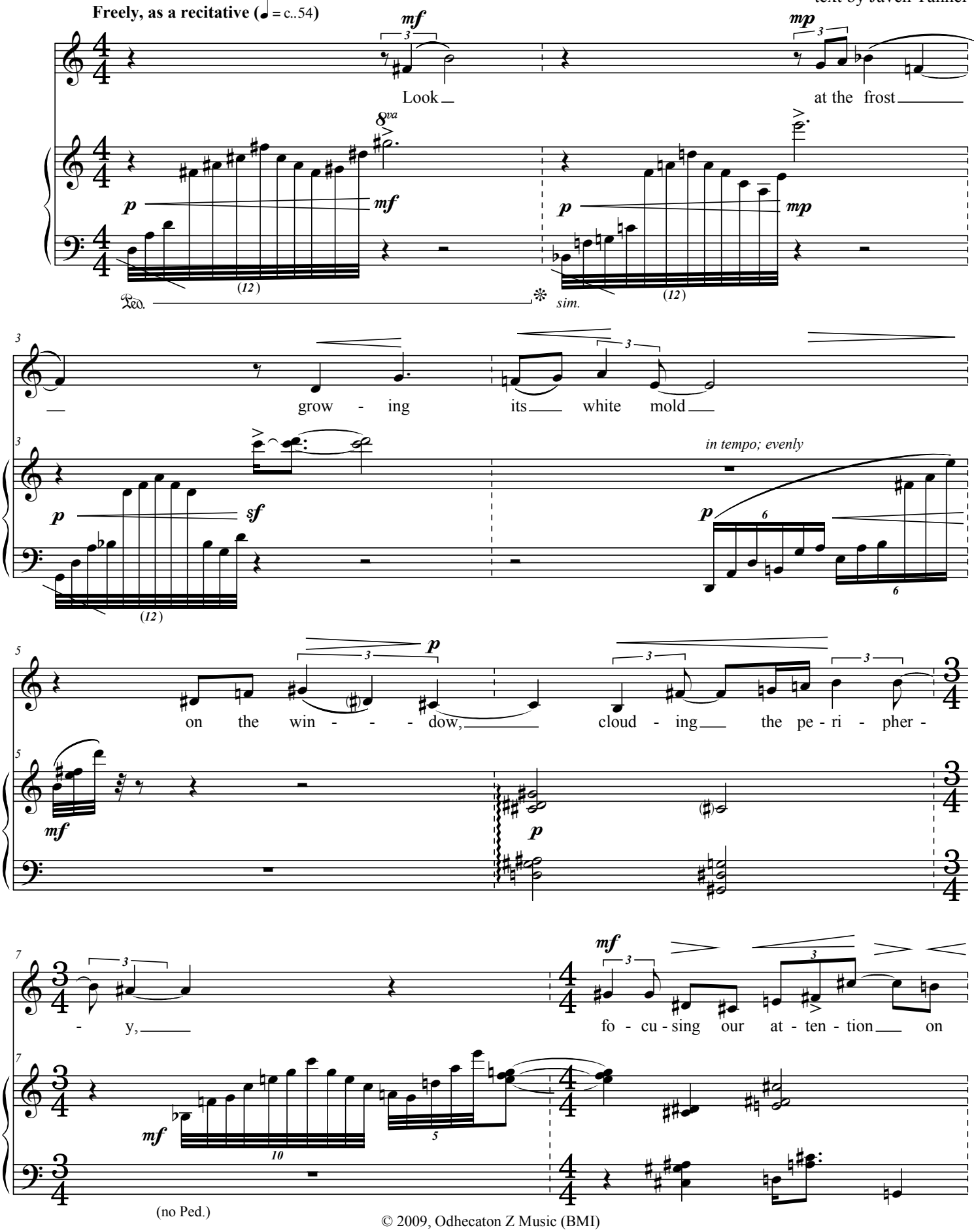

C
mp
or ran - cid ice de - cay-ing in - to wa - - - - - ter.
mf
p
Ped.
8va
And what re - mains
(8va)
pp
is sus - pect
poco
at best.


40
mf
It will not be a - - - ble
40
mf
42
f
to com - - - - - - - fort us.
42
(LH)
in resignation...
mf
rit.
p
44
It will not be a - ble to
44
a tempo
46
com - - fort us.
46
pp
Ped.

Sudden Music

4.

Lansing McLoskey
text by Javen Tanner



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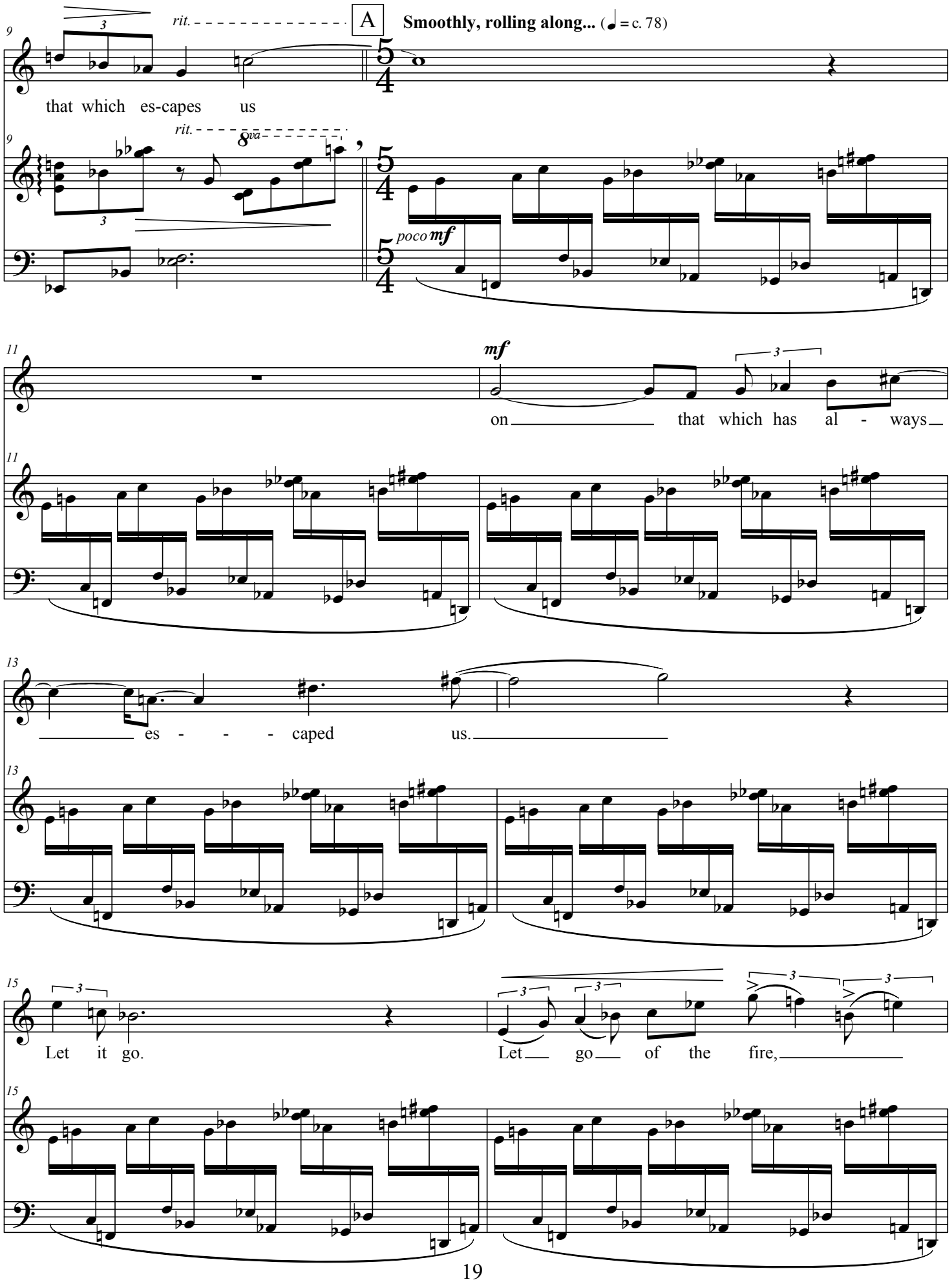
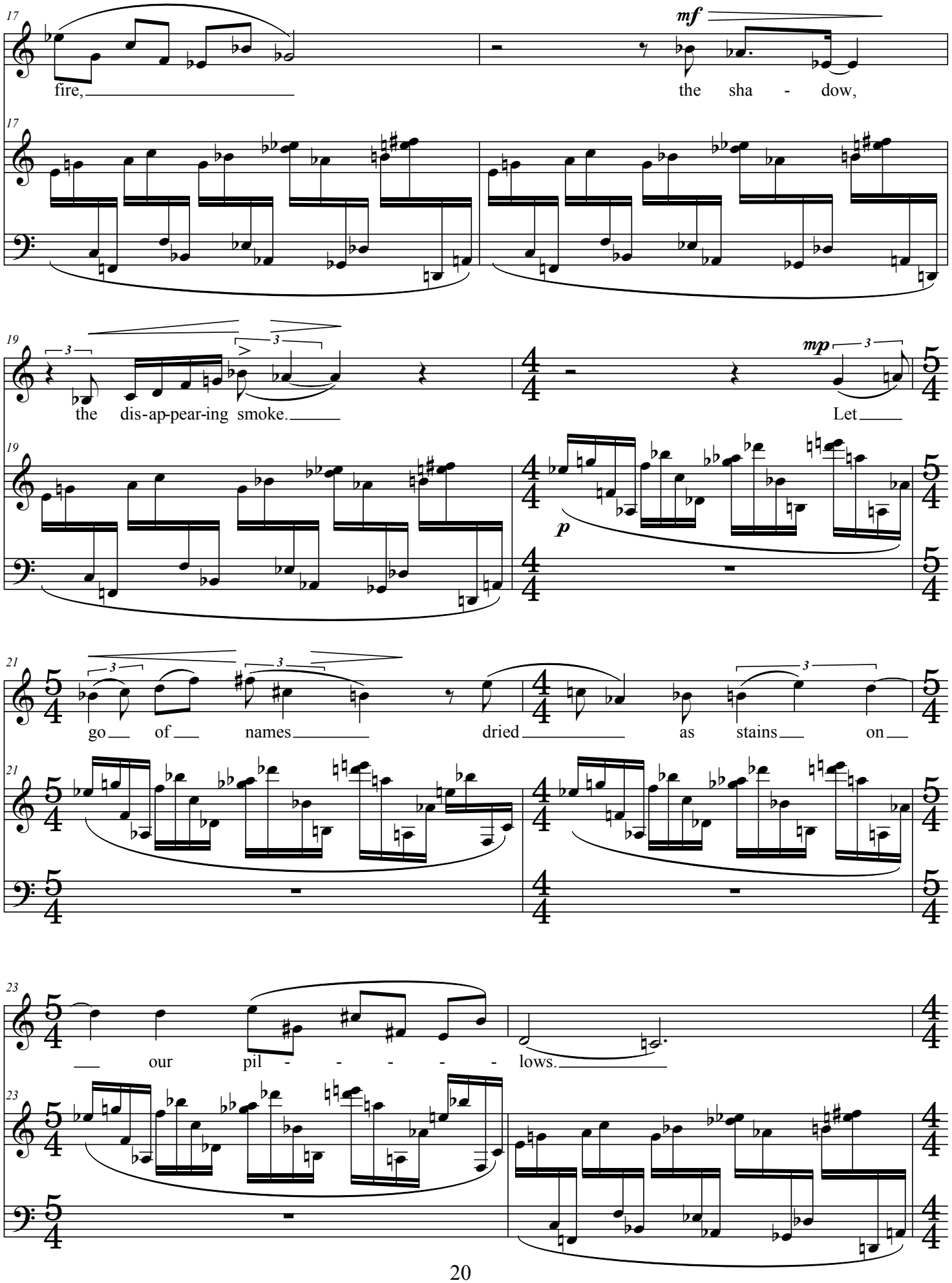
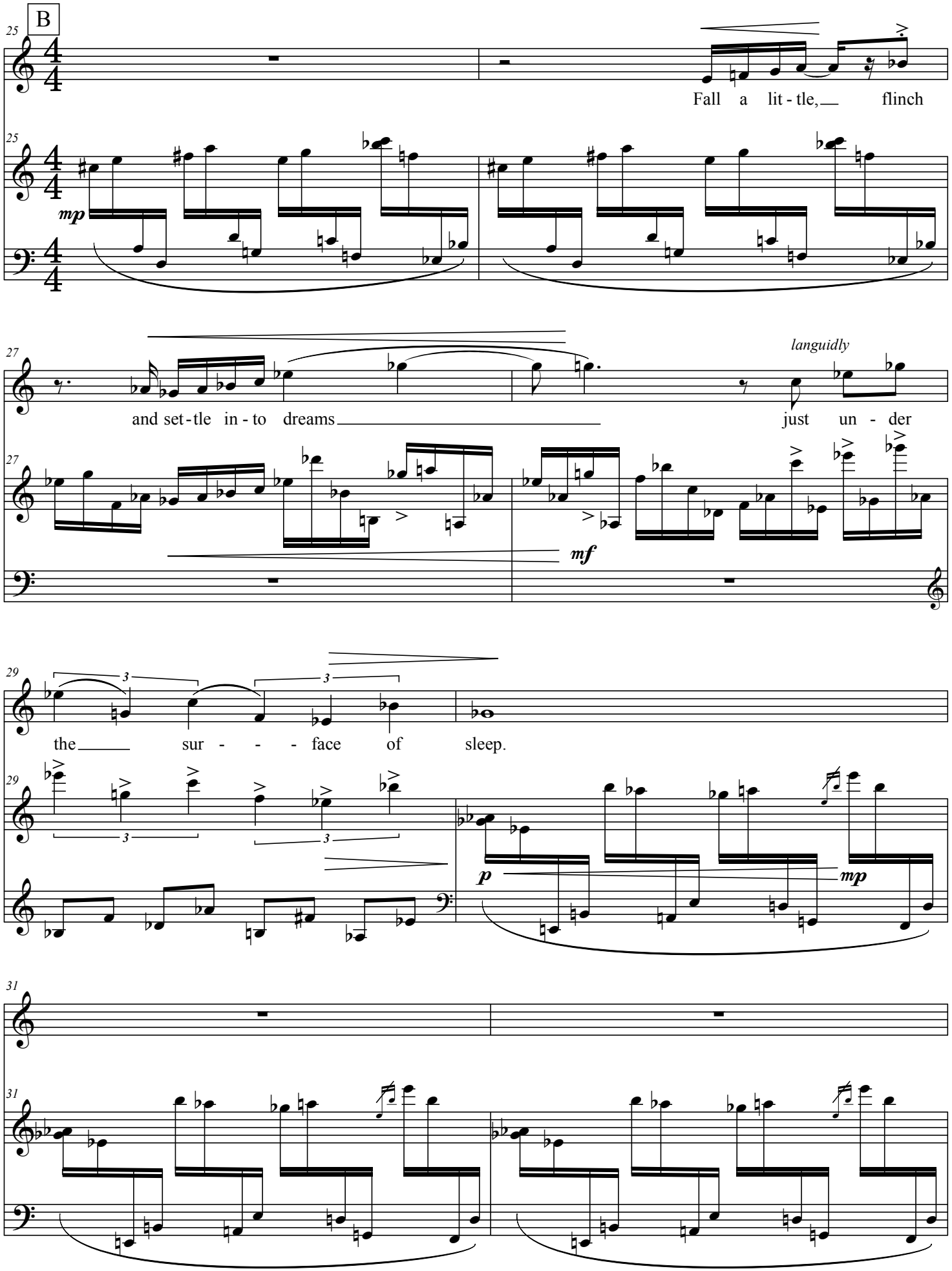
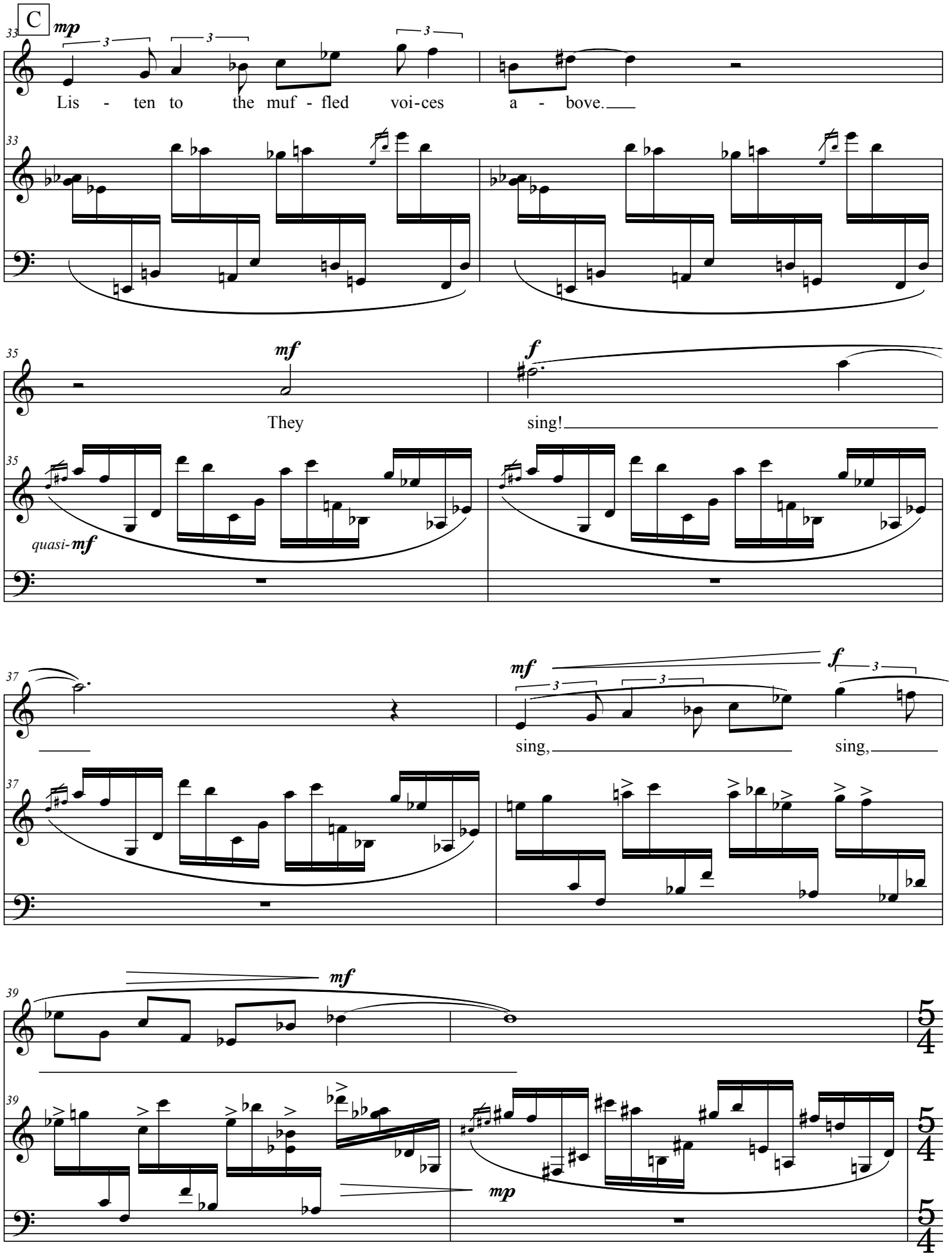
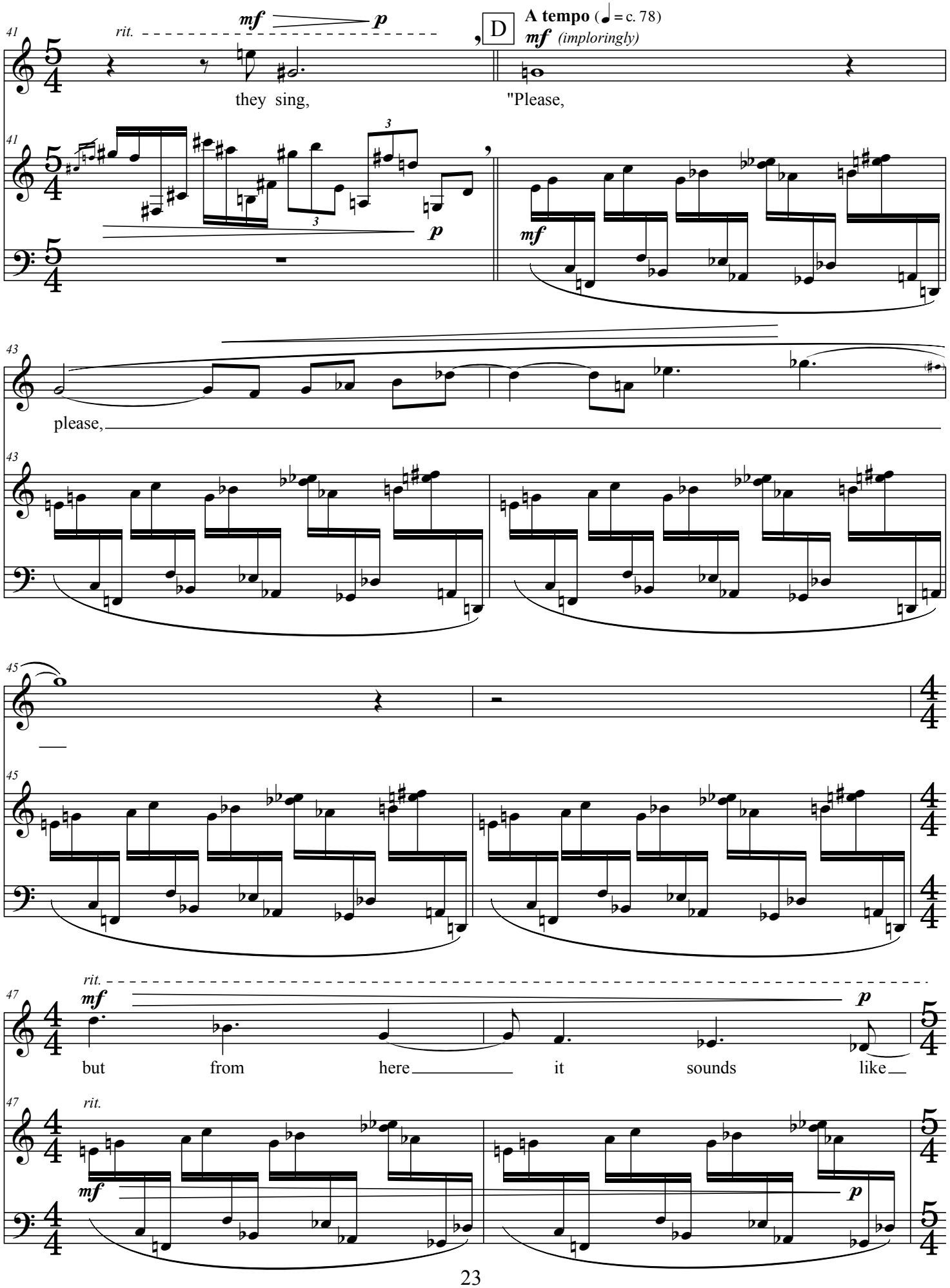
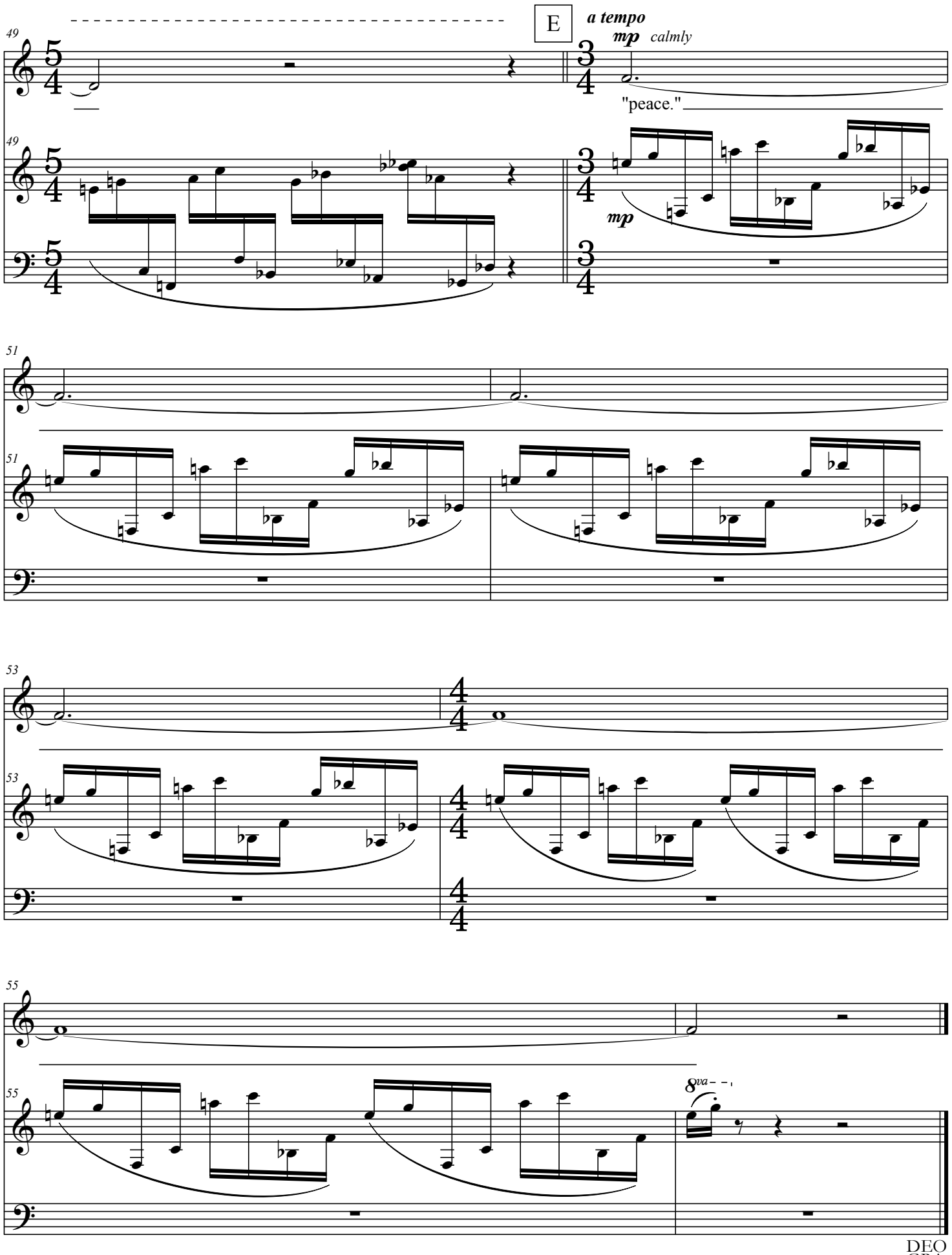

rit.
A
Smoothly, rolling along... (♩ = c. 78)
that which es-capes us
8va
poco mf
mf
on that which has al - ways
es - - - caped us.
Let it go.
Let go of the fire,


17
fire,
mf
the sha - dow,
19
the dis-ap-pear-ing smoke.
mp
Let
p
21
go of names dried as stains on
23
our pil - - - - - lows.


B
25
Fall a lit - tle, flinch
mp
27
languidly
and set - tle in - to dreams
just un - der
mf
29
the sur - - - face of sleep.
p
mp
31


C
33
mp
Lis - ten to the muf - fled voi-ces a - bove.
35
mf
They
f
sing!
quasi-mf
37
mf
f
sing,
sing,
39
mf
mp
5/4


41
rit.
mf
p
D
A tempo (♩ = c. 78)
mf (imploringly)
they sing,
"Please,
3
3
p
mf
43
please,
45
47
rit.
mf
p
but
from
here
it
sounds
like


E
a tempo
mp calmly
"peace."
mp
8va