Paul Salerni

Something Permanent

(poems by Cynthia Rylant on photographs by Walker Evans)

for

Mezzo-soprano
Alto Flute
Clarinet in A
Violin
Violoncello

I. Land
II. Mission
*III. Minstrels**s***
IV. Boys
V. Apartment
VI. Bed
VII. Rocker

arrangement by the composer dedicated to Nora Suggs and SATORI
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I. Land

Cynthia Rylant

Paul Salerni

Andante

♩=80

Mezzo-soprano

p

She thought she could re - mem-ber a time

Alto Flute

p

simile

Clarinet in A

Violin

pp

simile

Violoncello

p

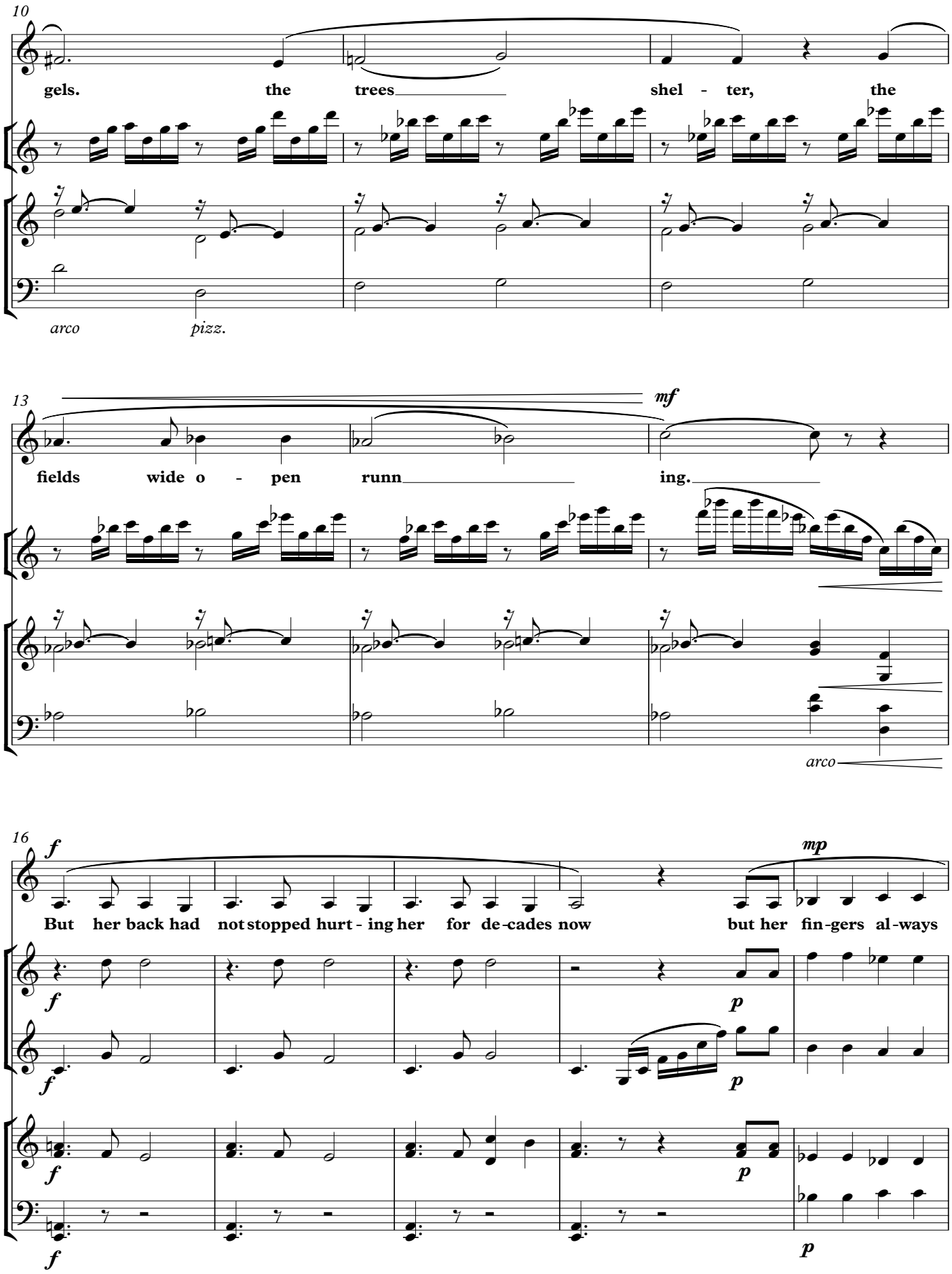
pizz.

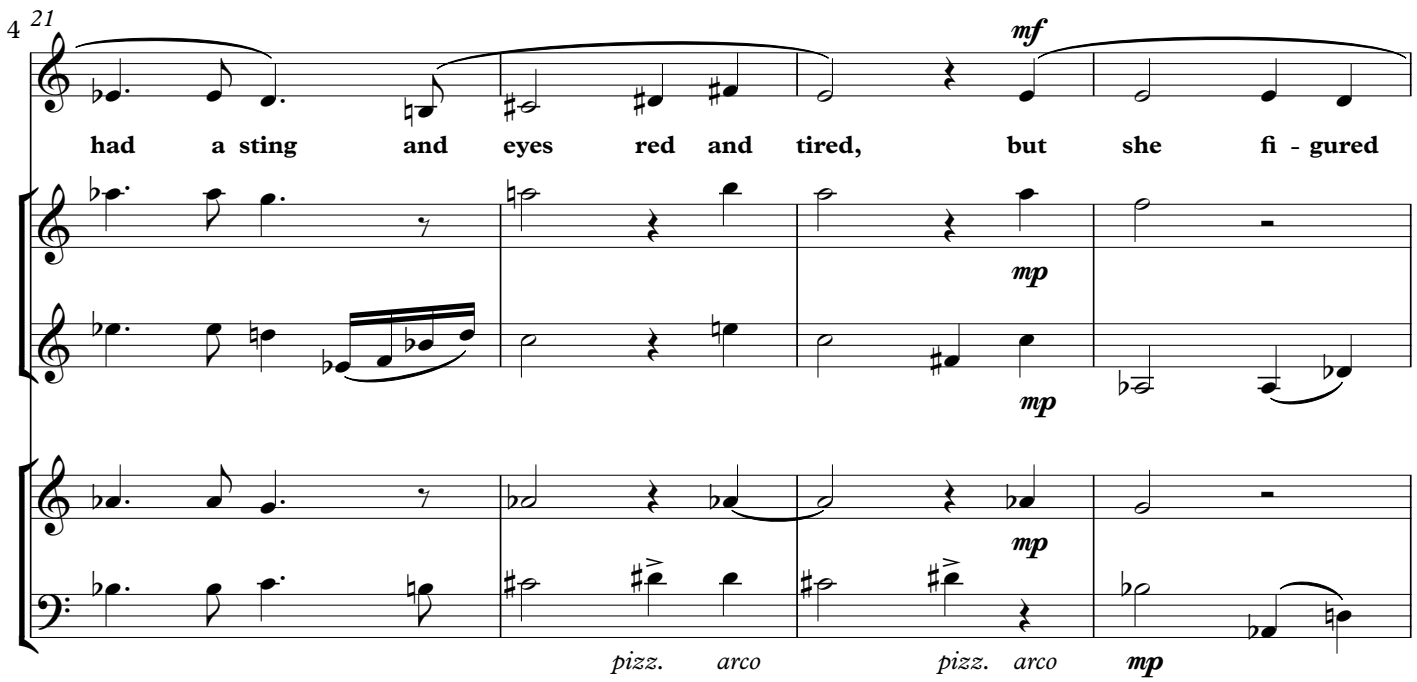
4

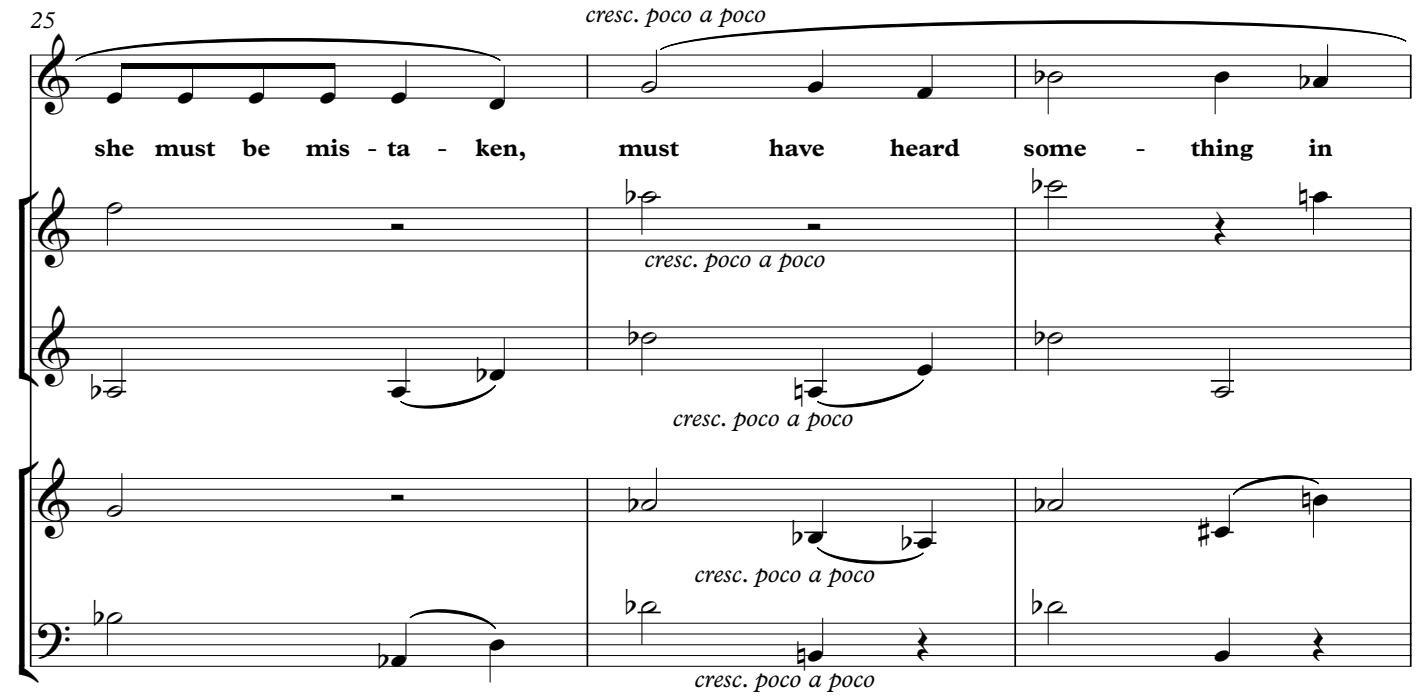
when the land was beau - ti-ful to her,

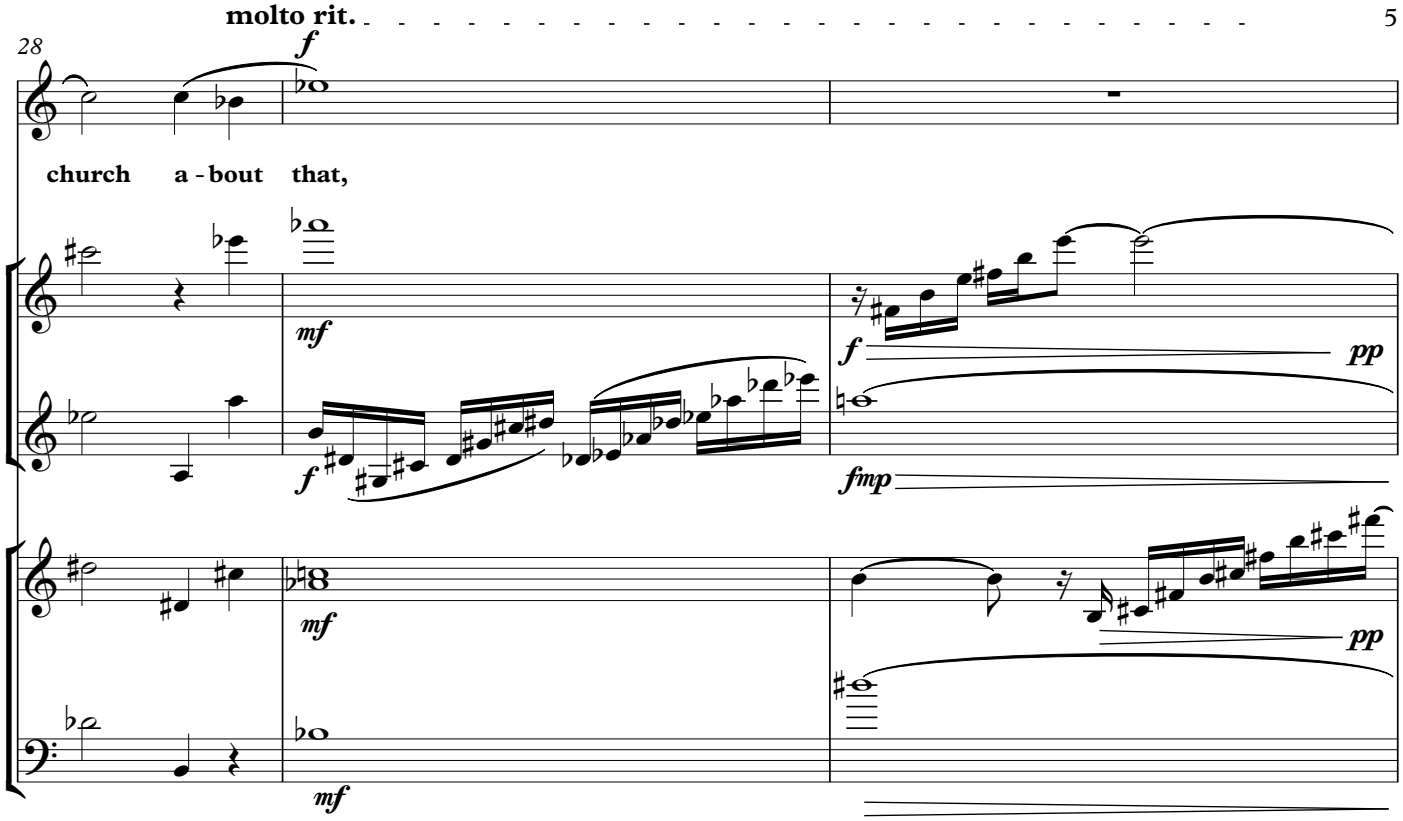
7

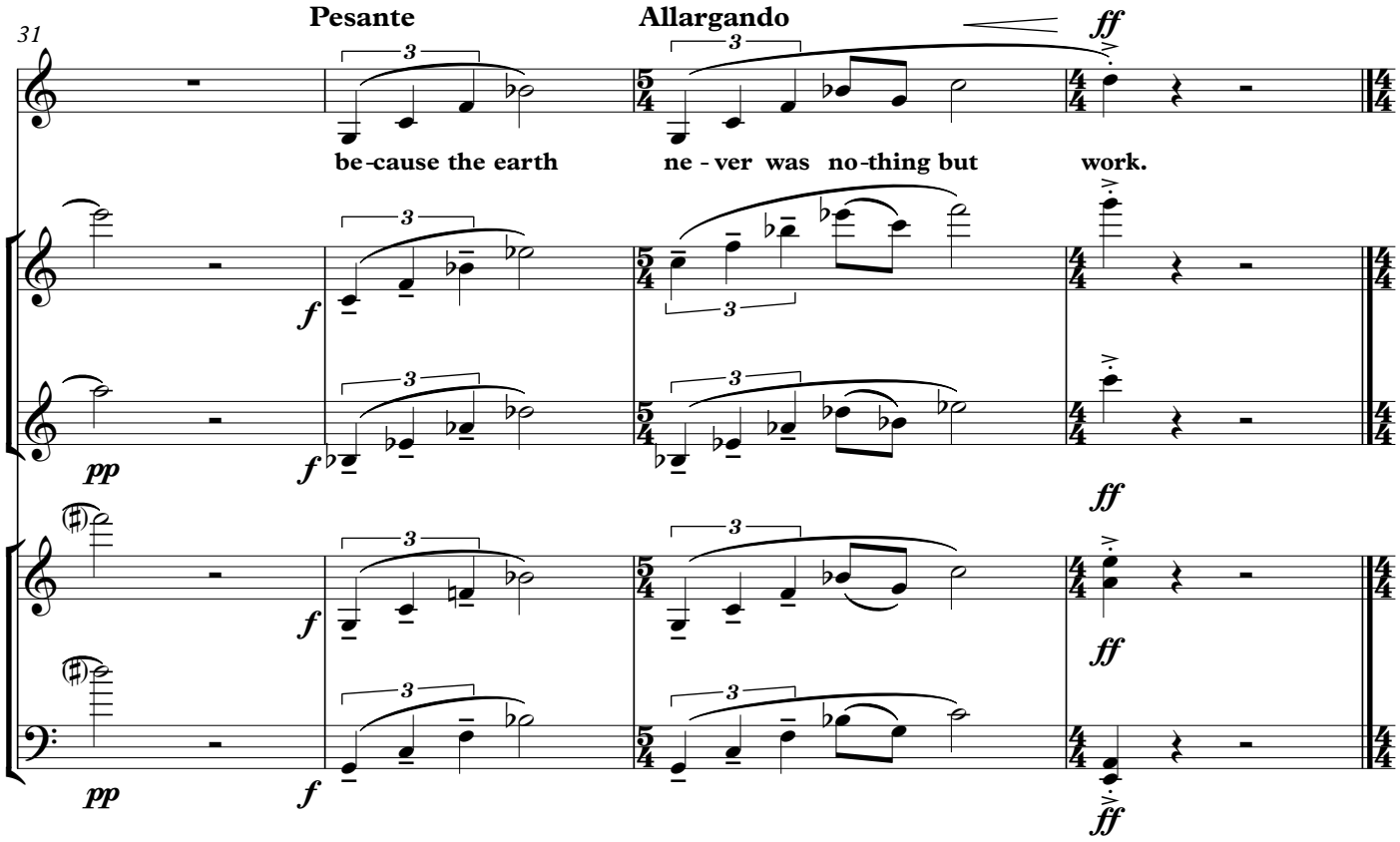
and the clouds were the pro-vince of an


10
gels. the trees shel - ter, the
arco pizz.
13
mf
fields wide o - pen runn ing.
arco
16
f
mp
But her back had not stopped hurt - ing her for de-cades now but her fin-gers al-ways
p


4
21
mf
had a sting and eyes red and tired, but she fi - gured
mp
mp
mp
pizz. arco pizz. arco
mp

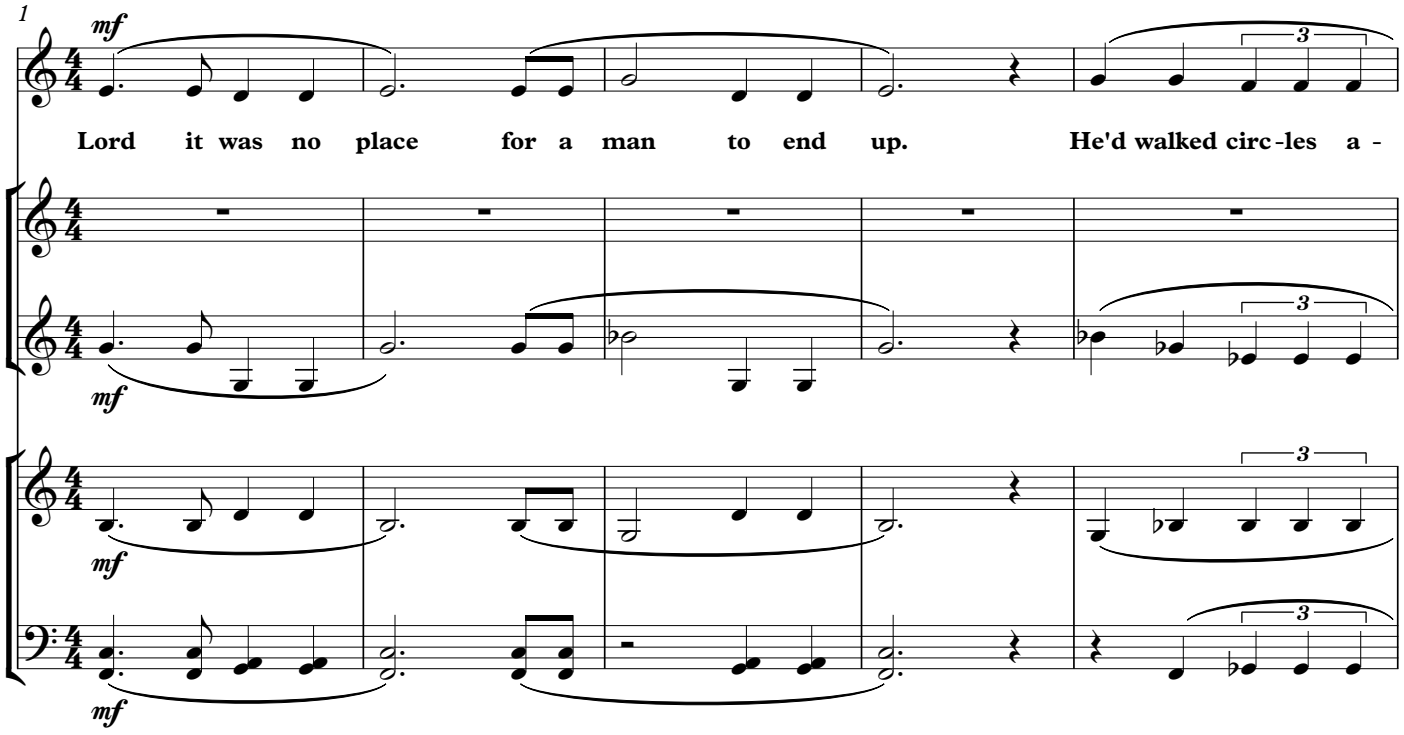

25
cresc. poco a poco
she must be mis - ta - ken, must have heard some - thing in
cresc. poco a poco
cresc. poco a poco
cresc. poco a poco
cresc. poco a poco

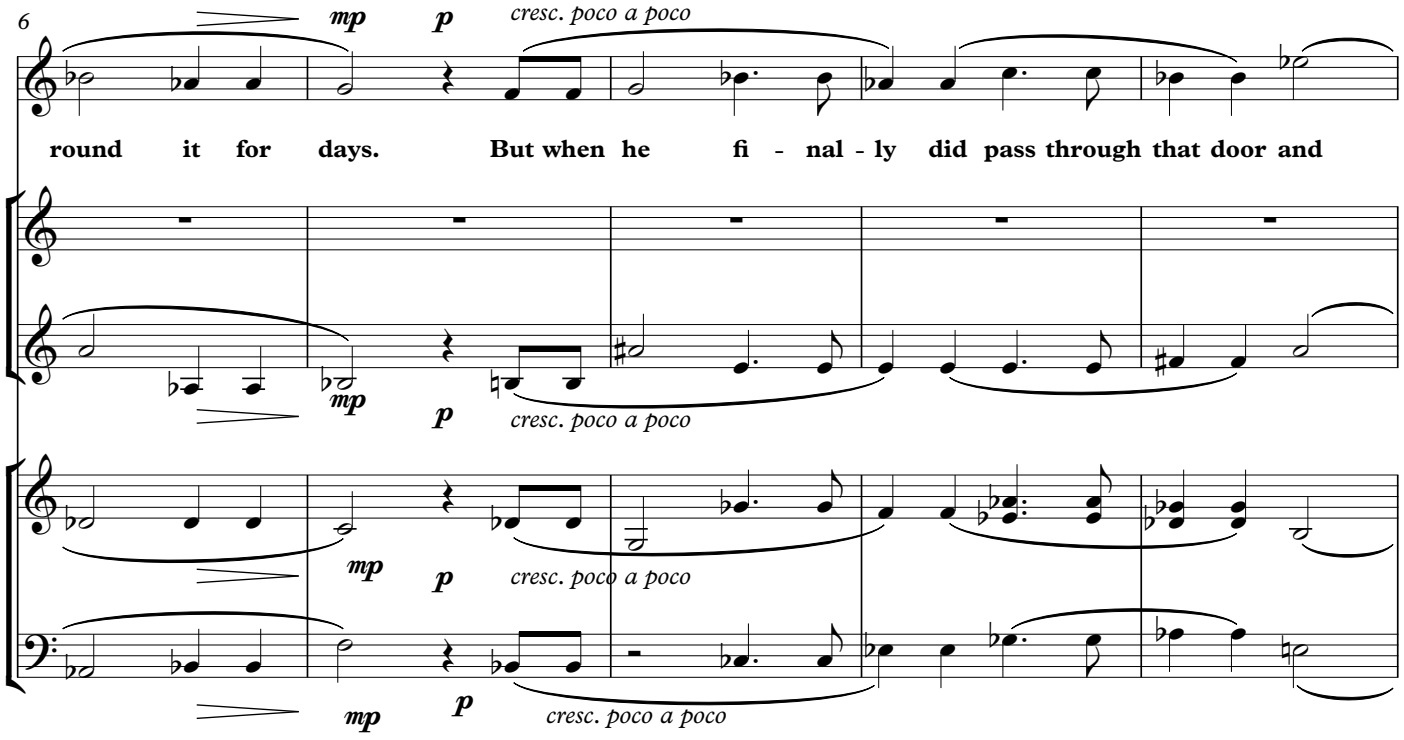

molto rit.
28
f
church a - bout that,
mf
f
pp
fmp
mf
pp
mf

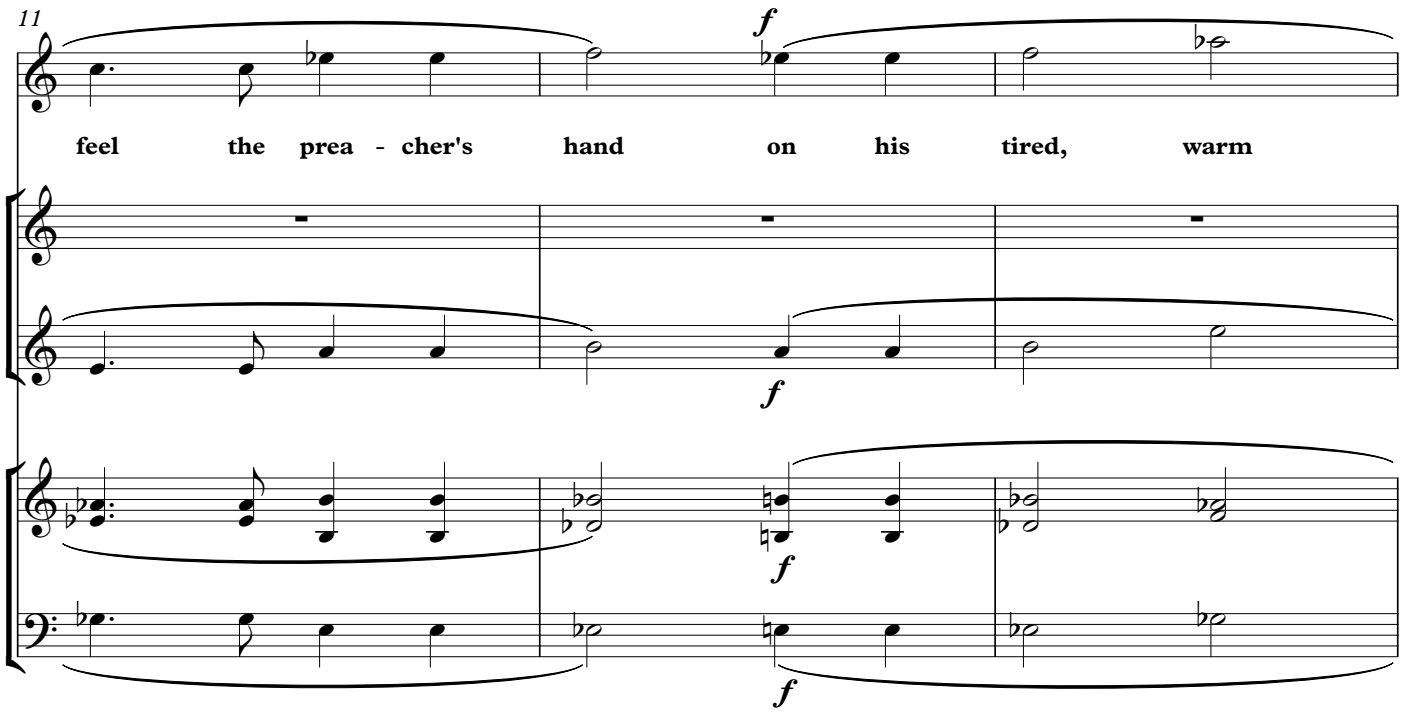

31
Pesante
Allargando
ff
be - cause the earth
ne - ver was no - thing but
work.
f
pp
f
ff
f
ff
pp
f
ff

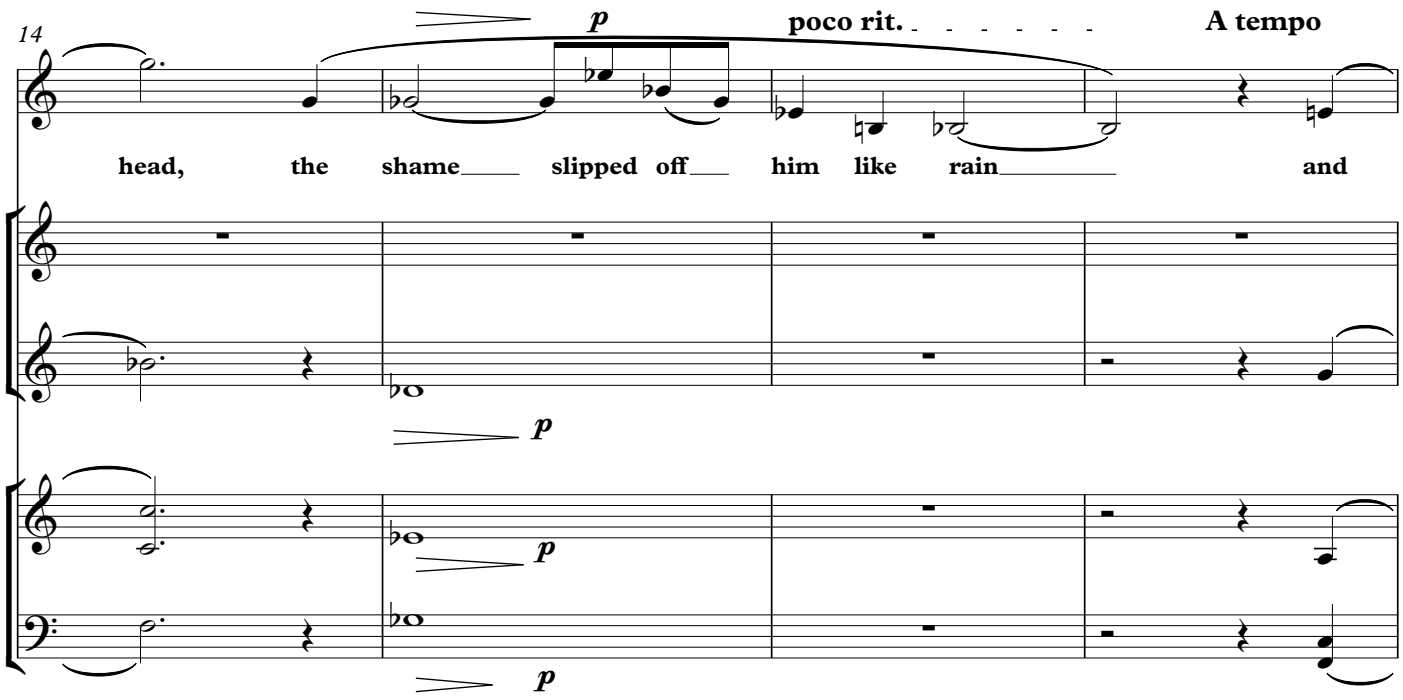
6 **Pesante**

♩=75


1
mf
Lord it was no place for a man to end up. He'd walked circ-les a -
mf
mf
mf
3


6
mp
p
cresc. poco a poco
round it for days. But when he fi - nal - ly did pass through that door and
mp
p
cresc. poco a poco
mp
p
cresc. poco a poco
mp
p
cresc. poco a poco


11
f
feel the prea - cher's hand on his tired, warm
f
f
f


14
p
poco rit.
A tempo
head, the shame slipped off him like rain and
p
p
p

18

poco rit.

pp

he was a child a - gain: hun - gry, still, pure.

p

pp

pp

pp

III. Minstrels

Raggy

1

♩.=112

mf

It did - n't mat - ter if

f

mf

f

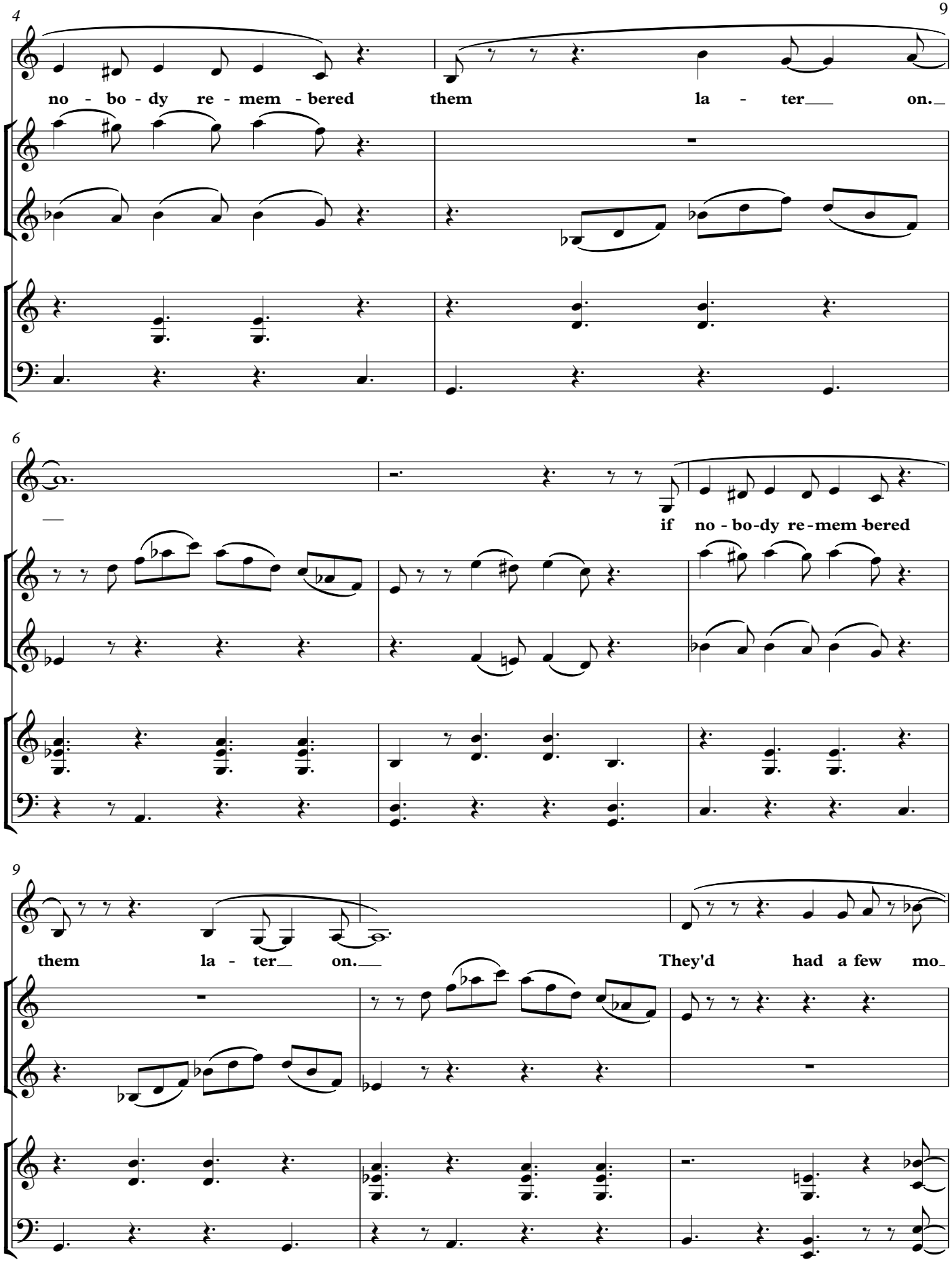
mf

f pizz.

mf

f pizz.

mf


4
no - bo - dy re - mem - bered them la - ter on.
6
if no - bo-dy re-mem-bered
9
them la - ter on.
They'd had a few mo_

12

ments to them - selves, on that stage,

14

And no - bo - dy knew

16

how much they would have paid to

poco ad lib. quasi recitativo senza tempo

19

get that time when no white folks could

23

In tempo

in ter - fere in their lives. When not a per - son

arco

arco

28

on this earth could touch or dis - turb them,

mf pp

mf pp

31

rit.

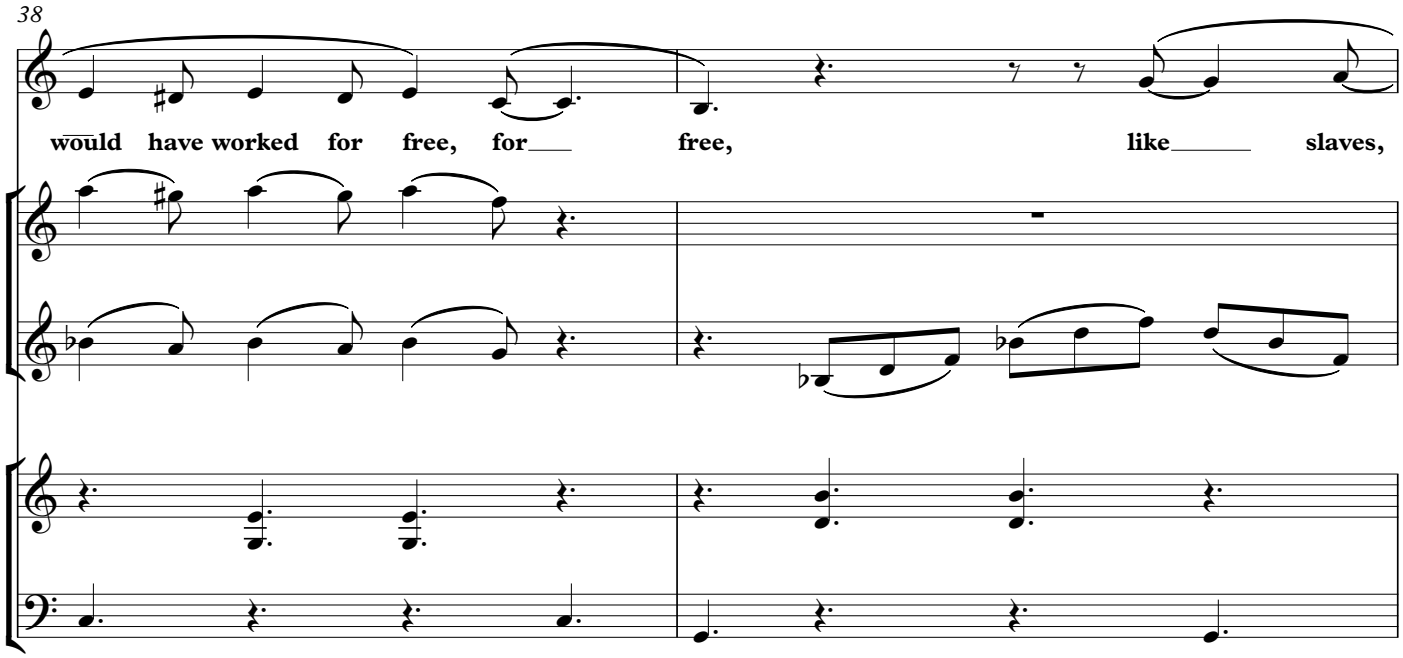
2 2

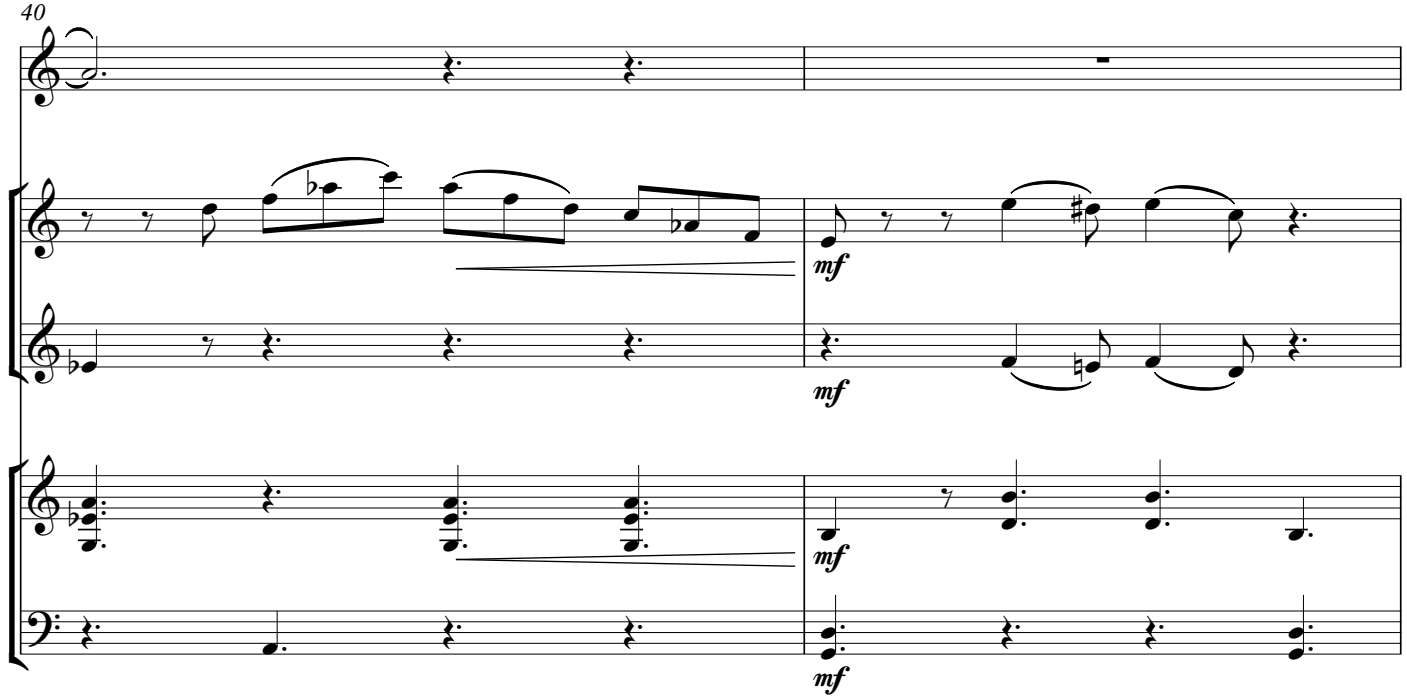
lest be ac - cused of spoil - ing what some con - si - dered_

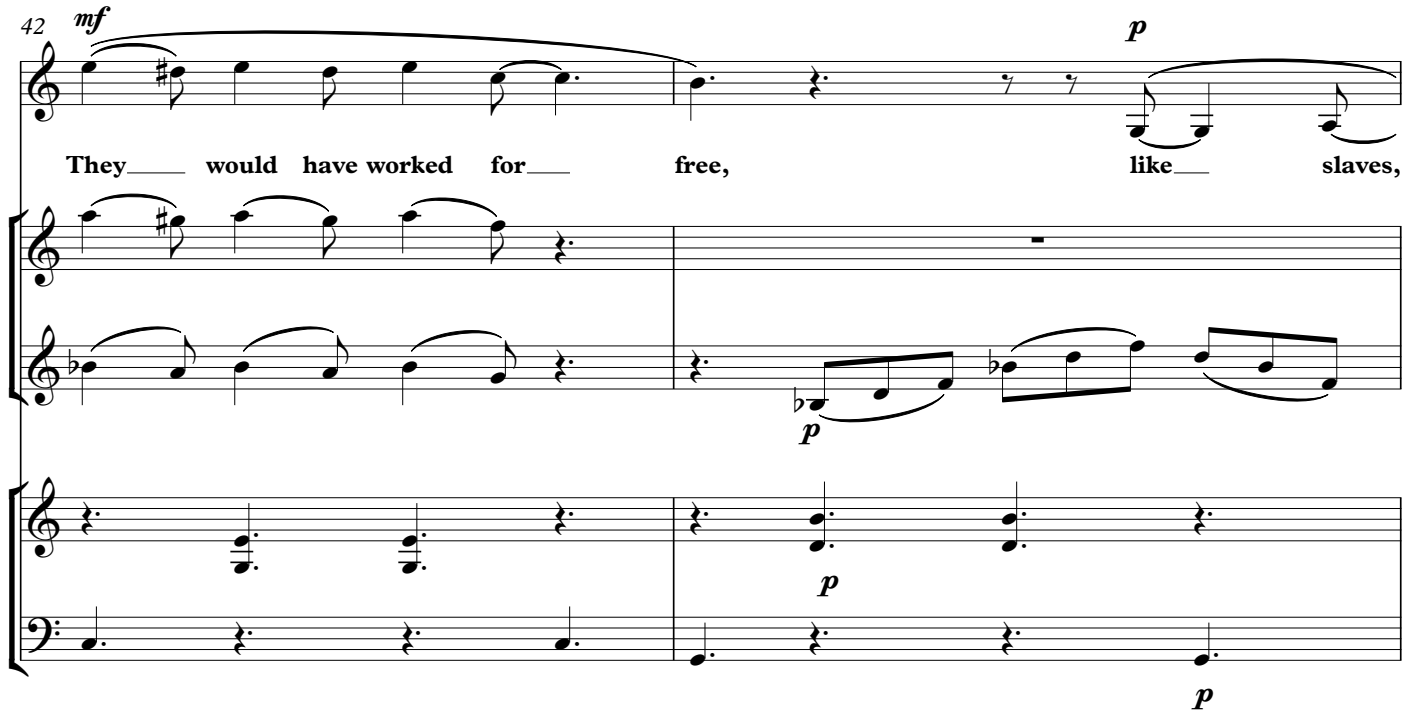
mf pp

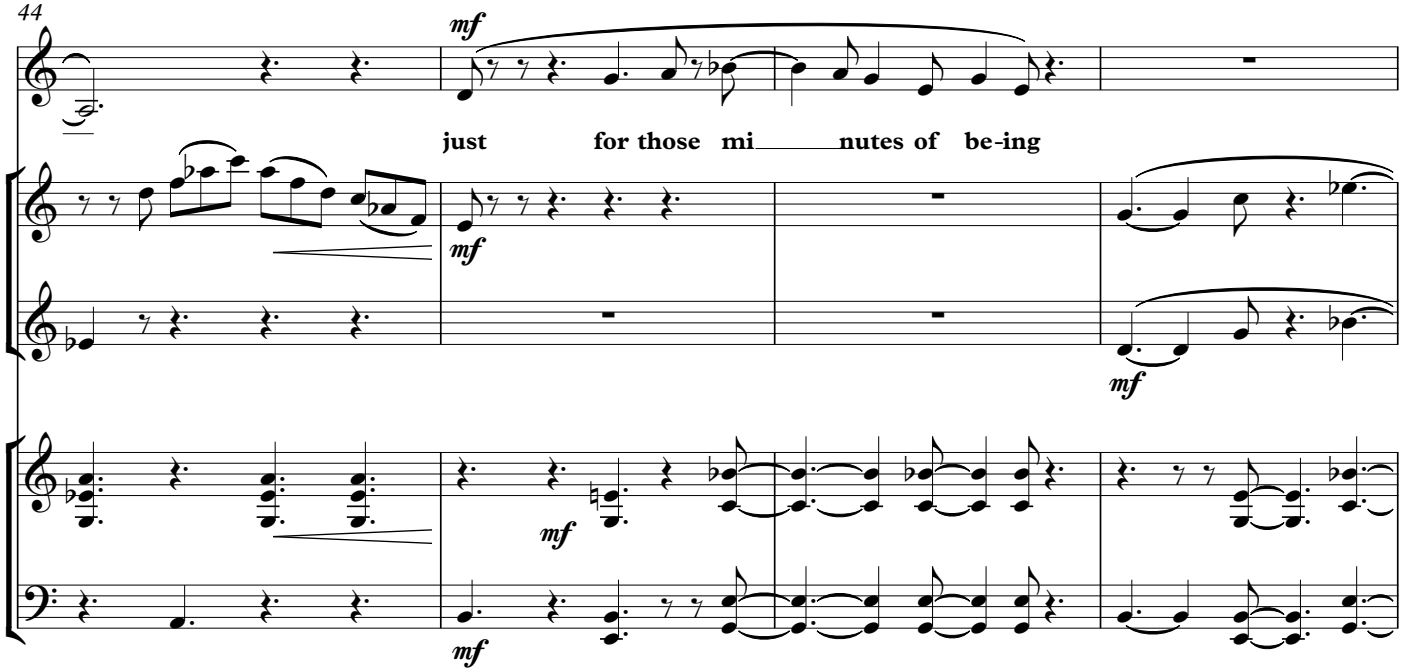
mf pp

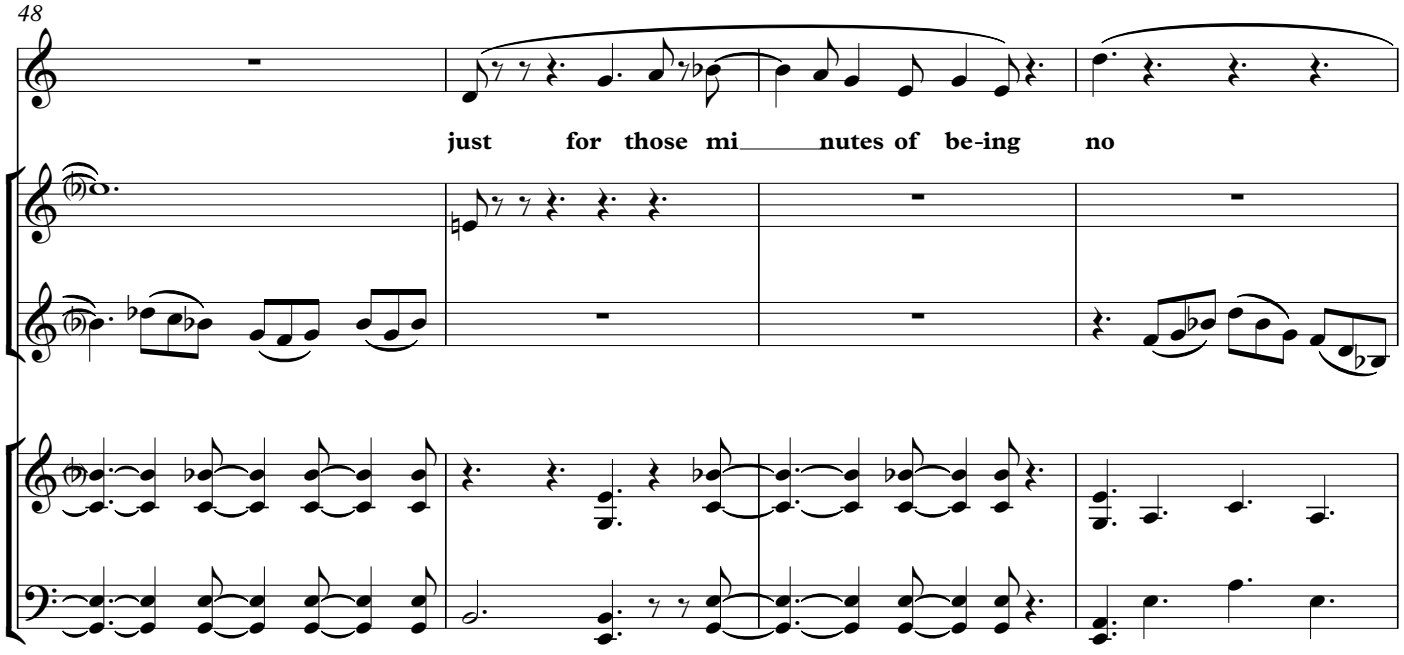
A tempo
34
mf
pp
mp
a good show.
They
pizz.
pizz.

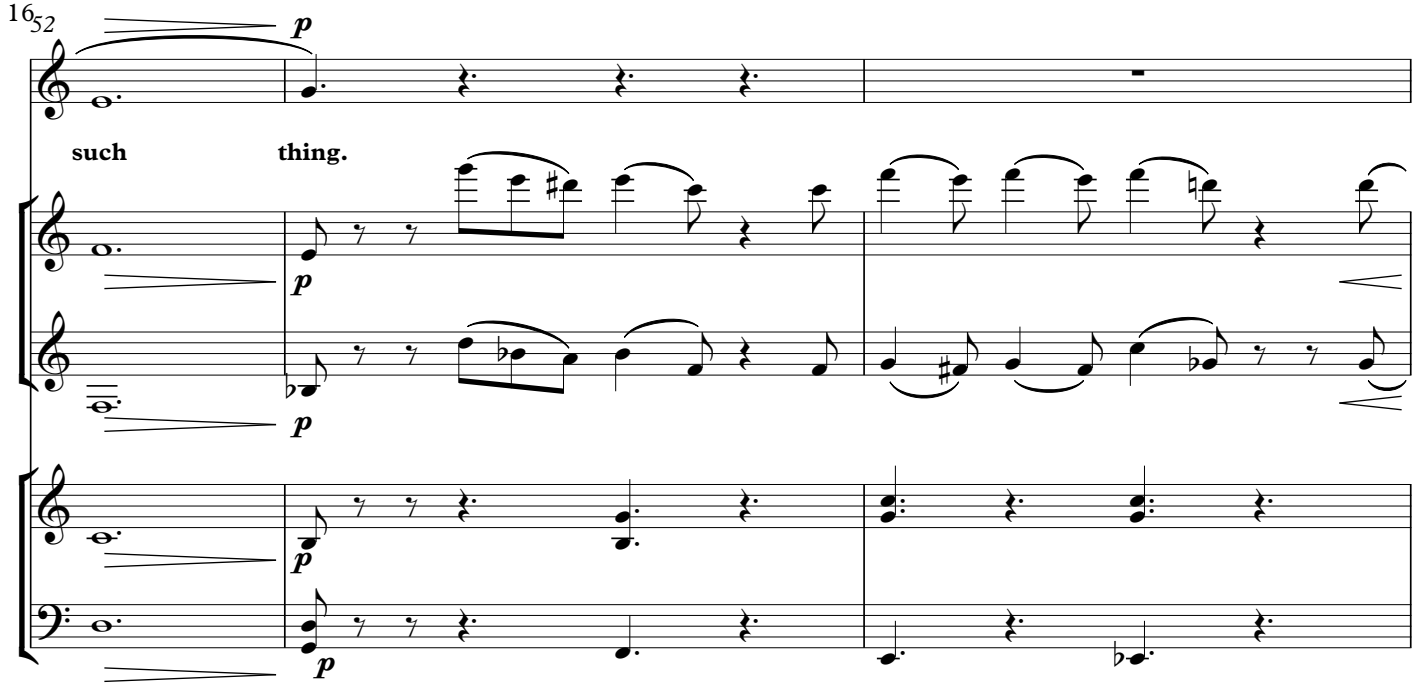

38
would have worked for free, for free, like slaves,

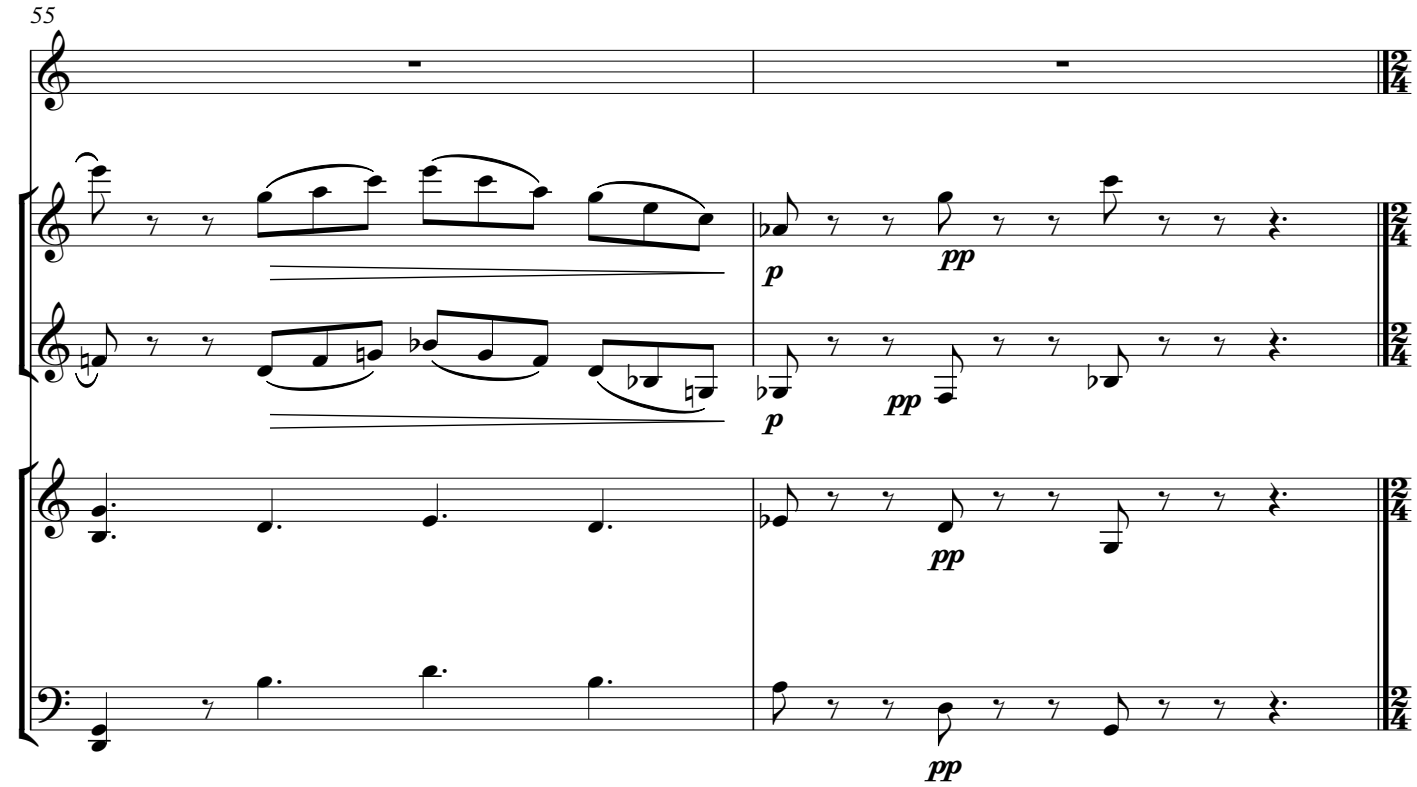

40
mf
mf
mf
mf

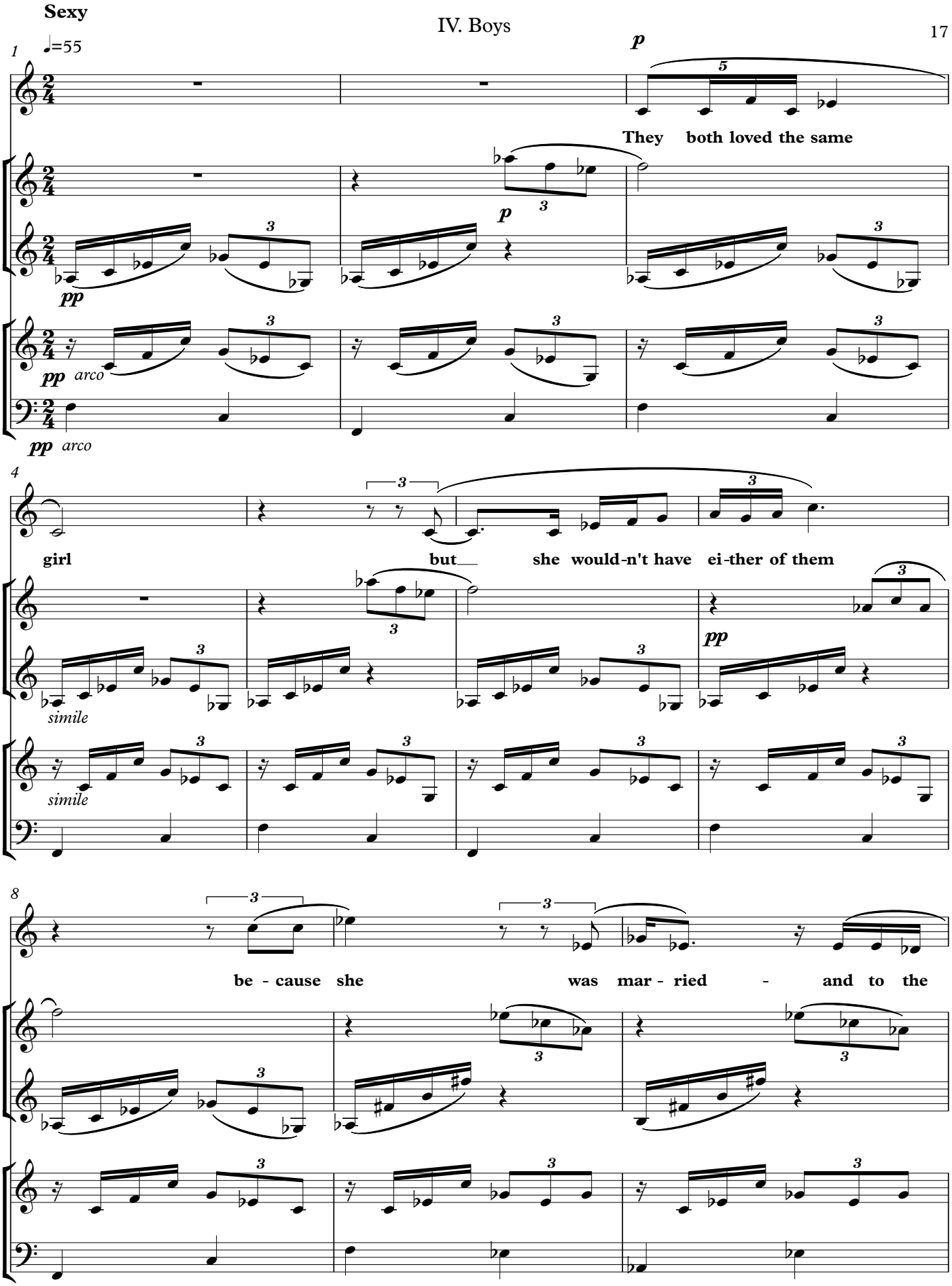

42
mf
p
They would have worked for free, like slaves,
p
p
p

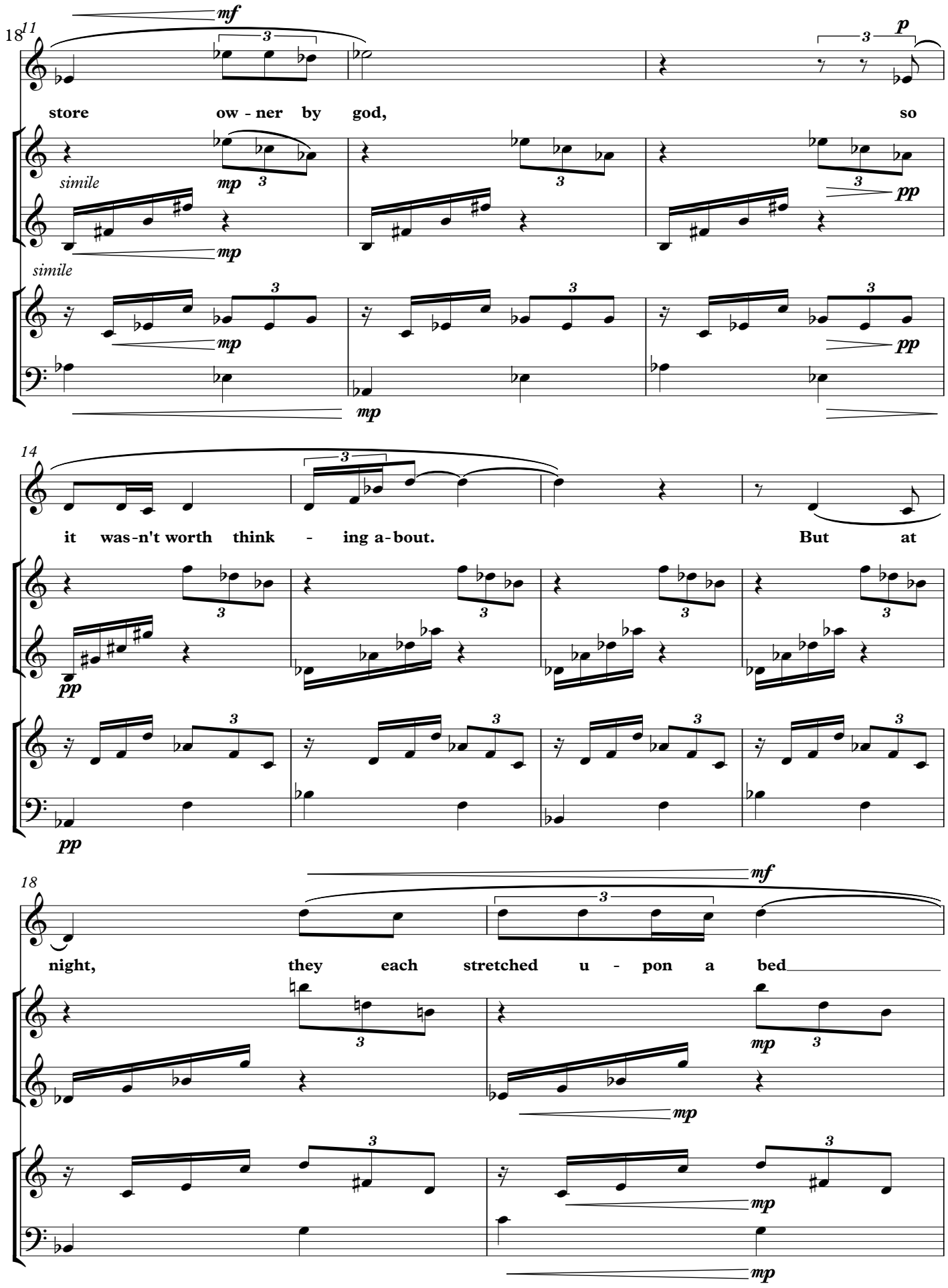

44
mf
just for those mi nutes of be-ing
mf
mf
mf
mf

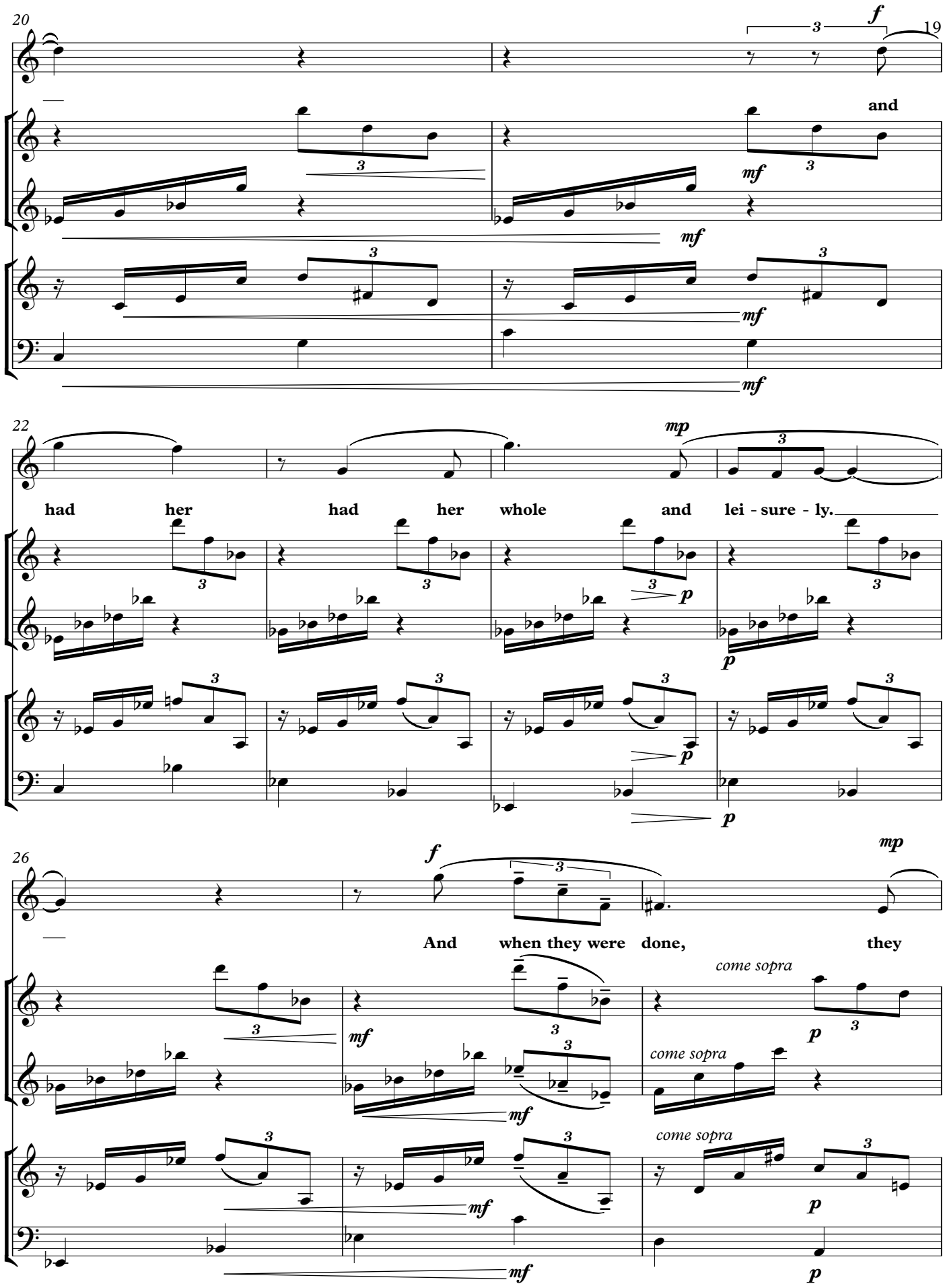

48
just for those mi nutes of be-ing no

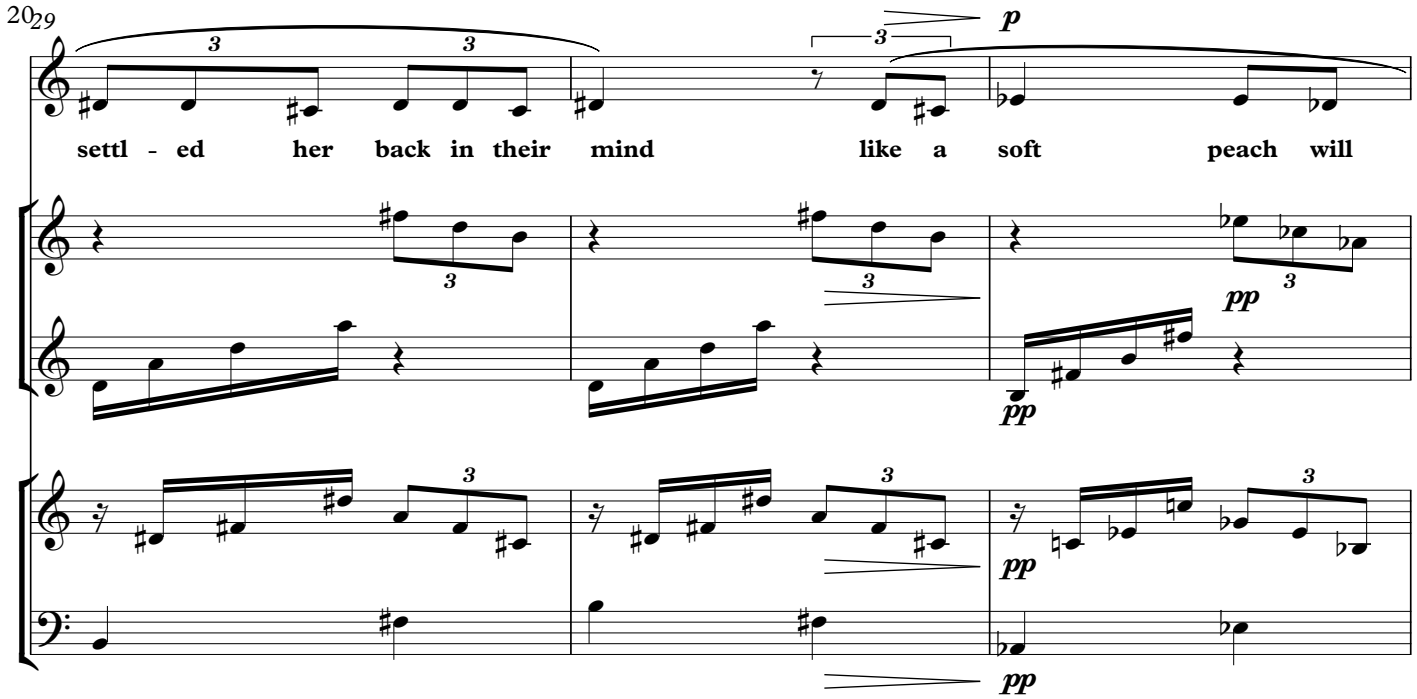

16
52
p
such
thing.
p
p
p
p

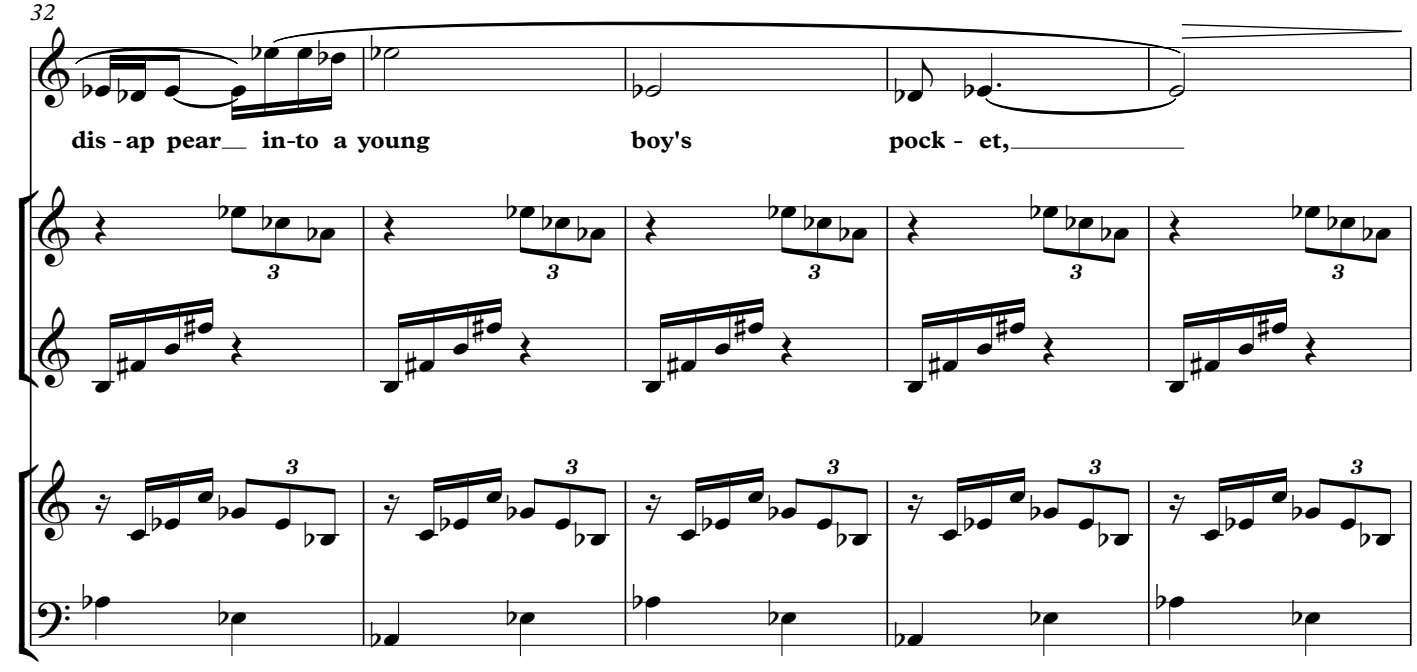

55
p
pp
p
pp
pp
pp

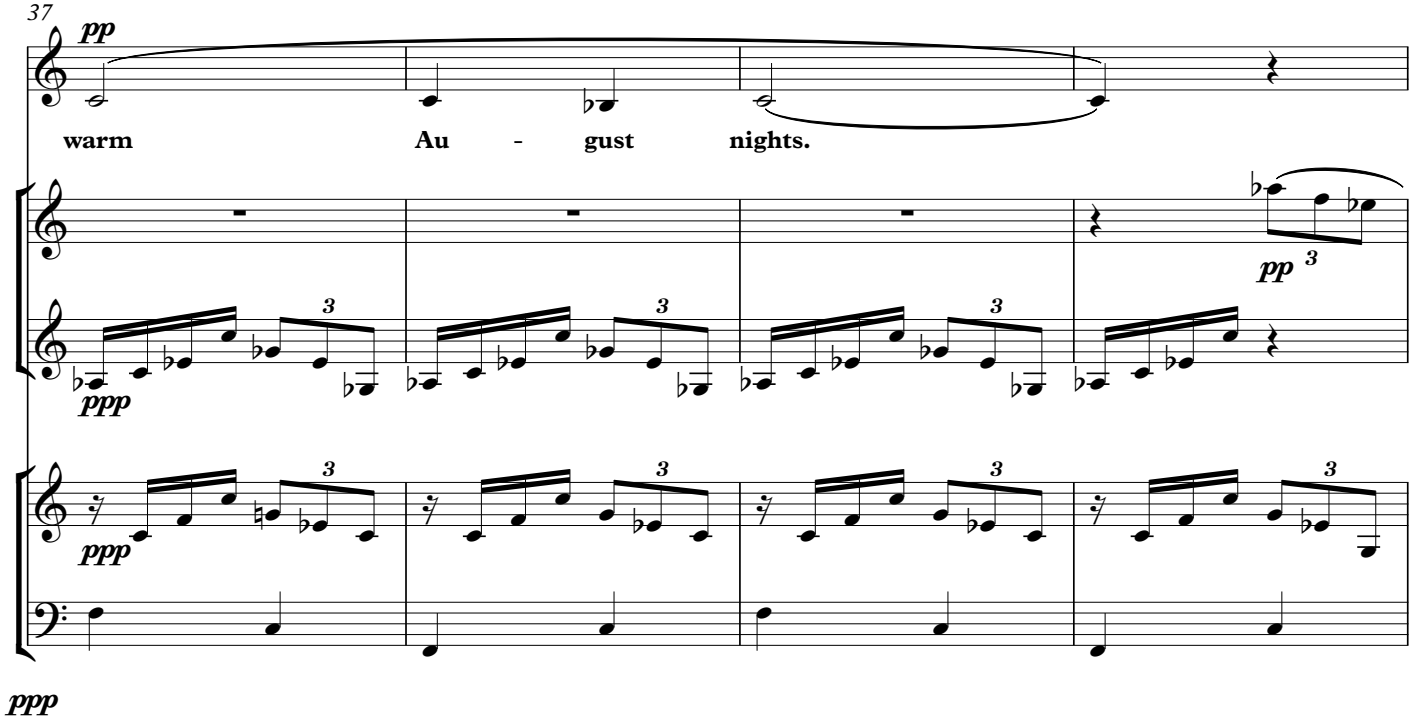

Sexy
♩=55
p
They both loved the same
pp
arco
girl
but she would-n't have ei-ther of them
simile
be - cause she was mar - ried - and to the

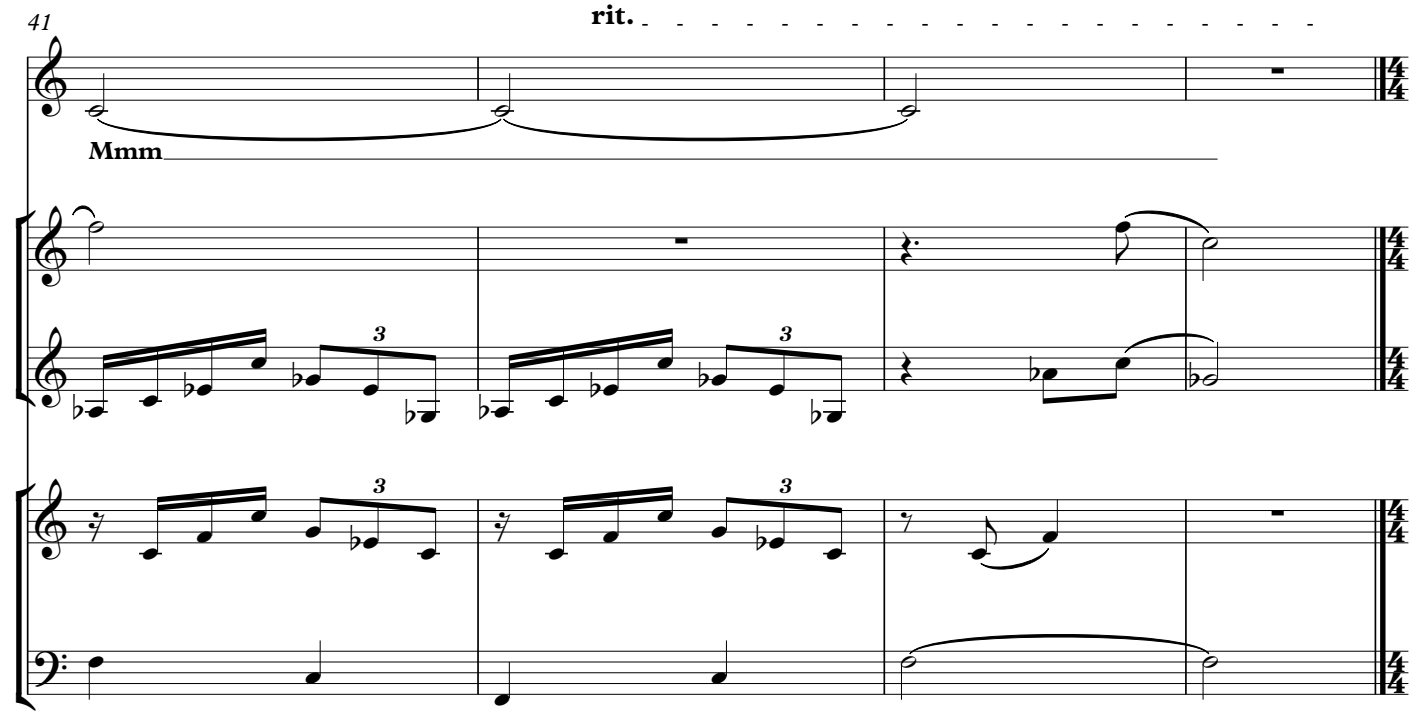

11
mf
p
store ow - ner by god, so
simile
mp
pp
14
it was-n't worth think - ing a-bout. But at
18
mf
night, they each stretched u - pon a bed

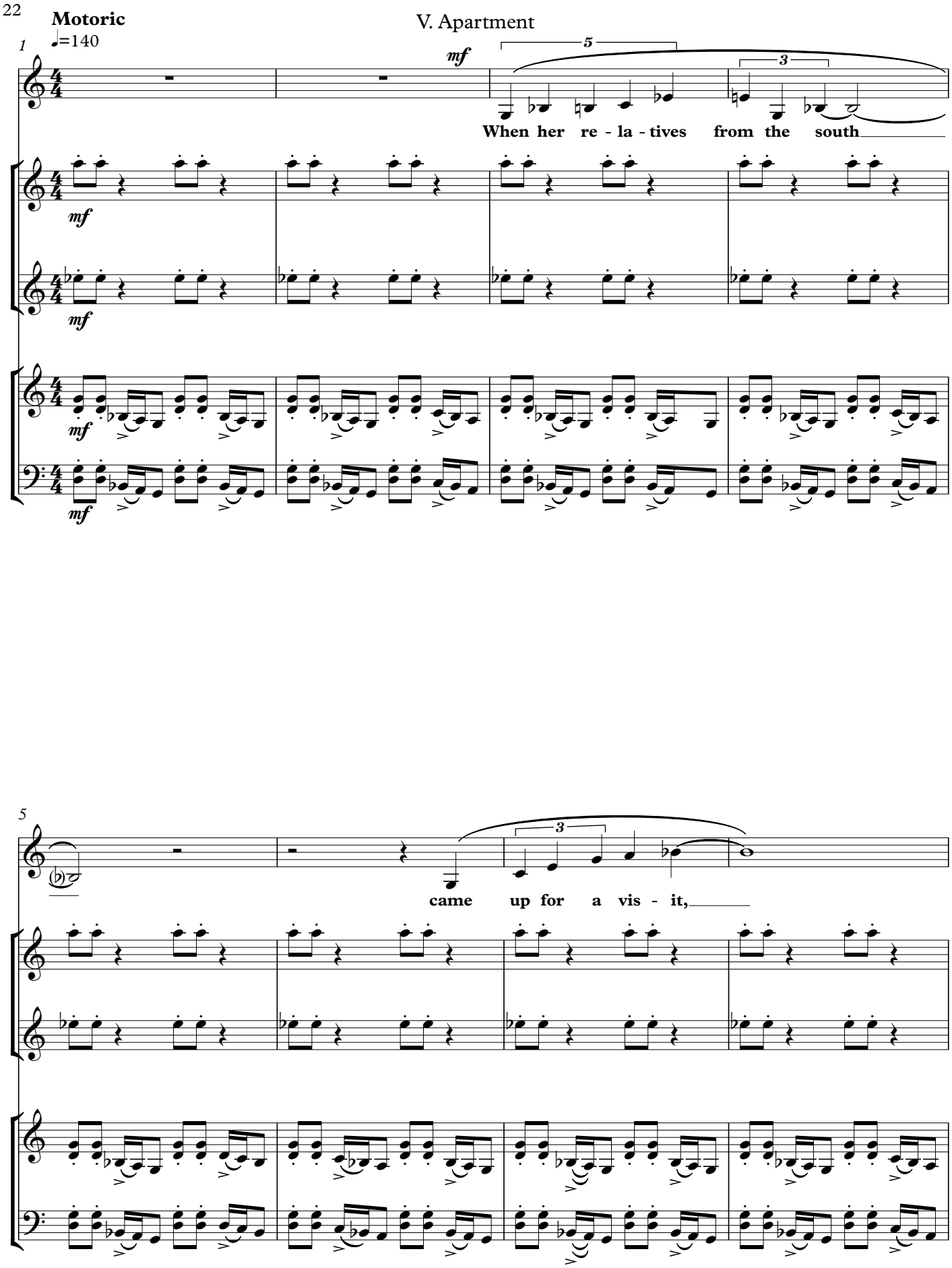

20
f
and
mf
22
mp
had her had her whole and lei - sure - ly.
p
26
f
mp
And when they were done, they
come sopra
mf
p

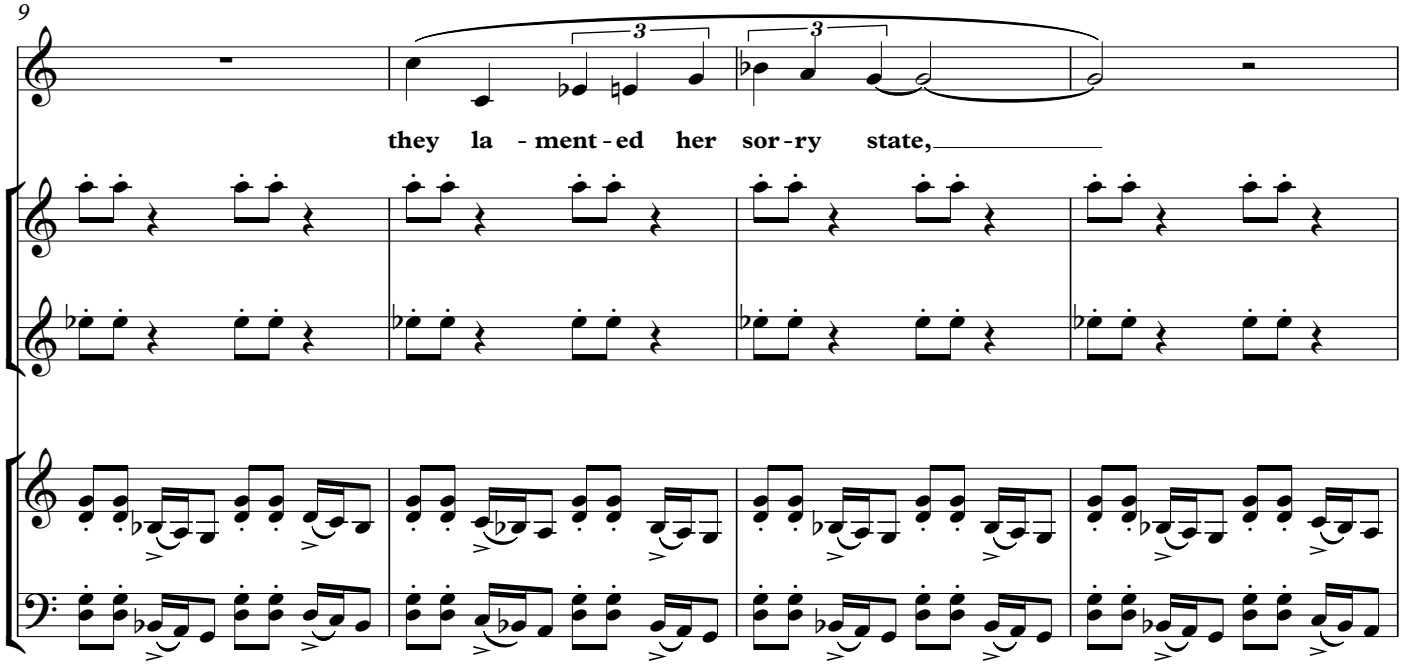

20
29
p
settl - ed her back in their mind like a soft peach will
pp
pp
pp
pp

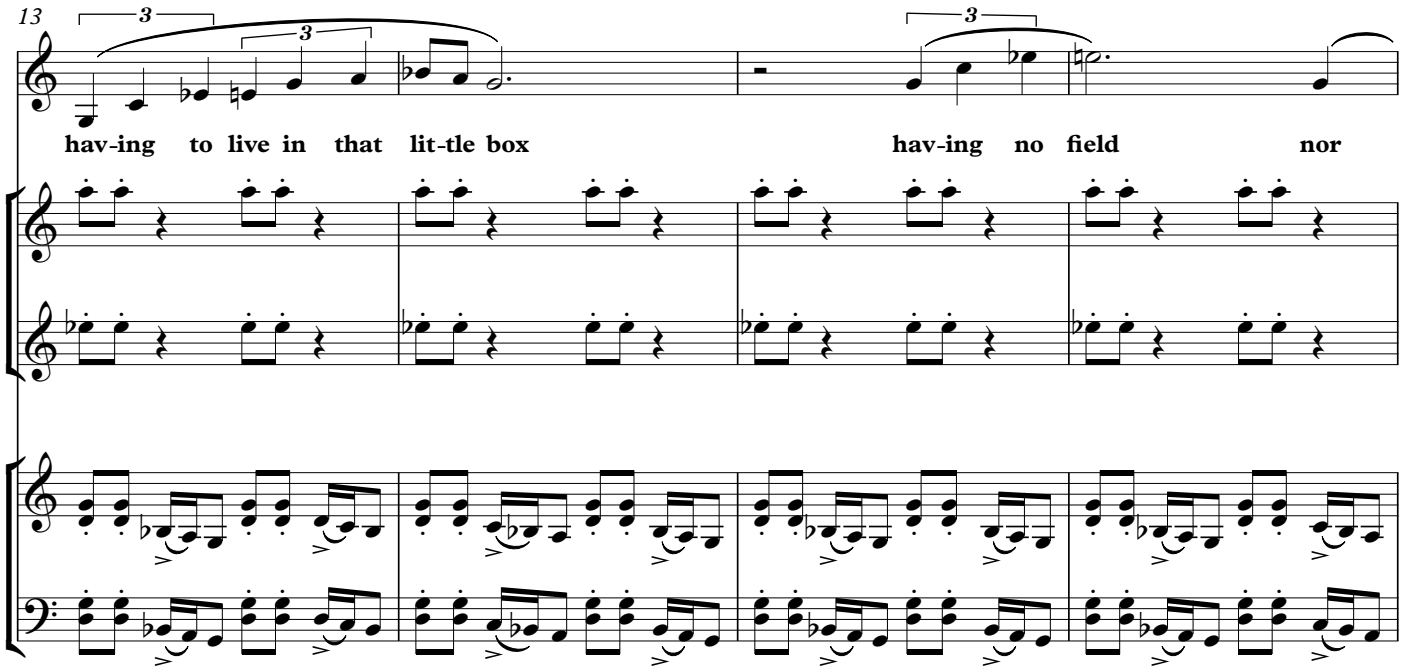

32
dis - ap pear in-to a young boy's pock - et,

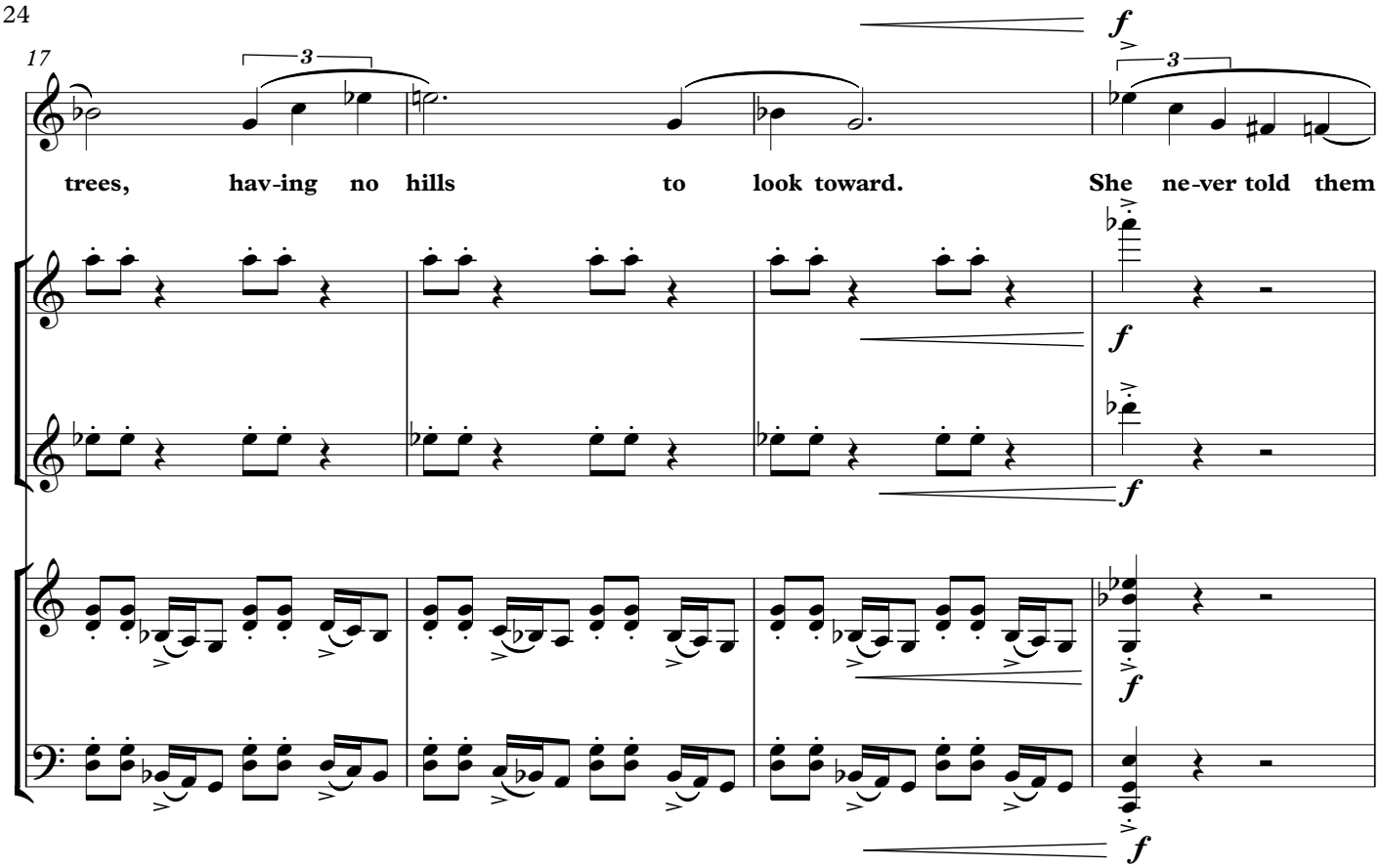

37
pp
warm Au - gust nights.
pp
ppp
ppp
ppp

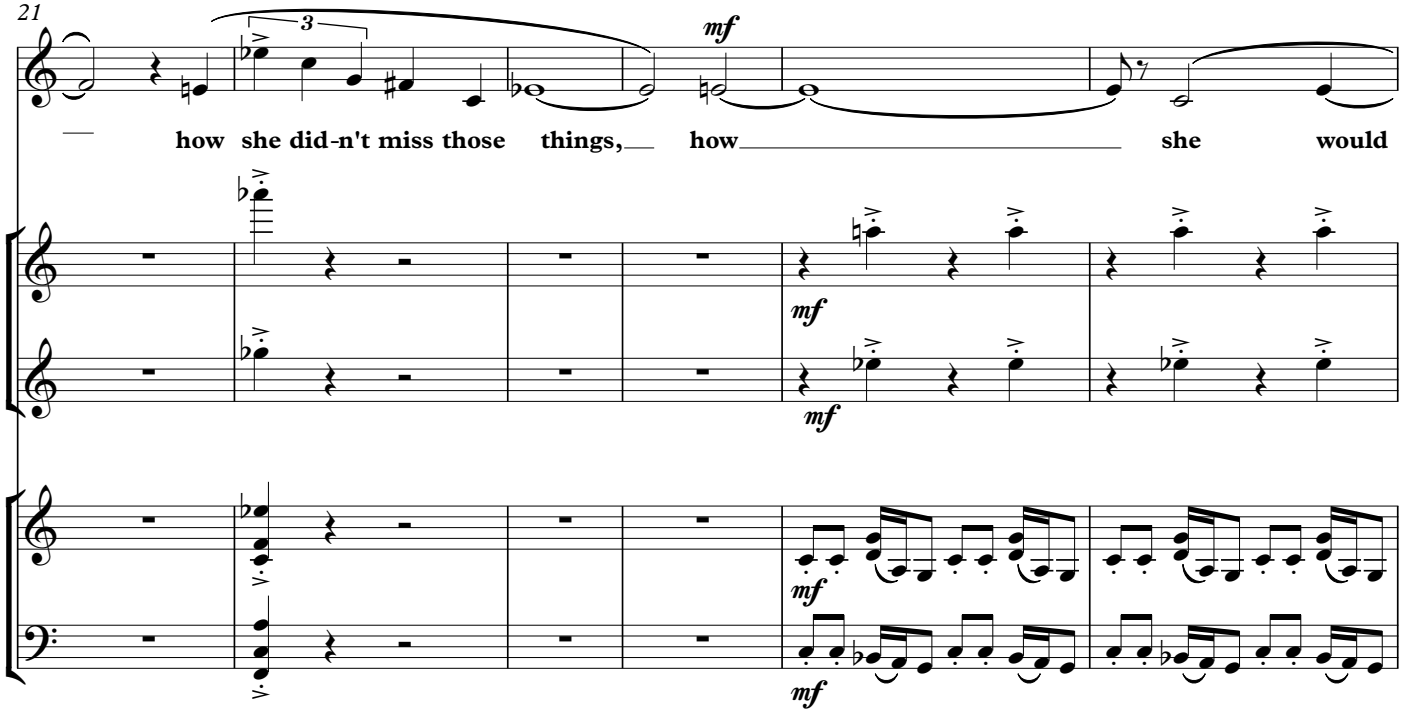

41
rit.
Mmm

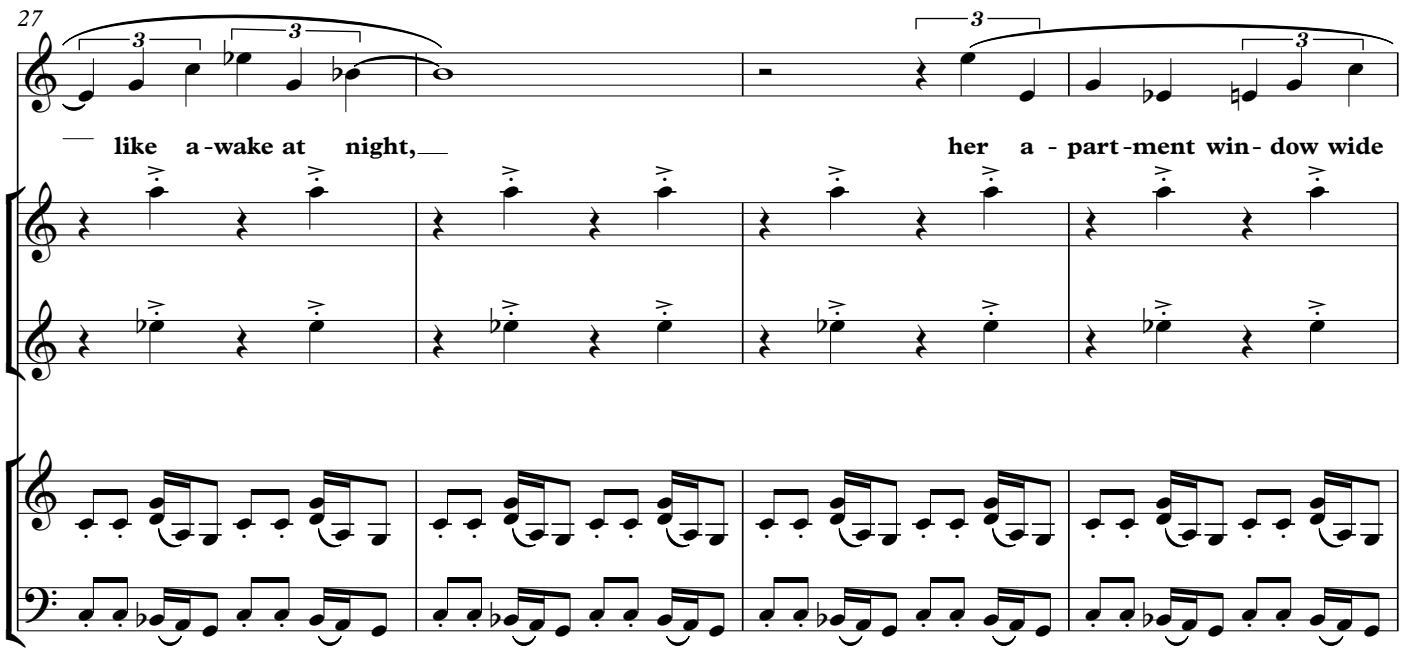

Motoric
♩=140
V. Apartment
mf
When her re - la - tives from the south
came up for a vis - it,

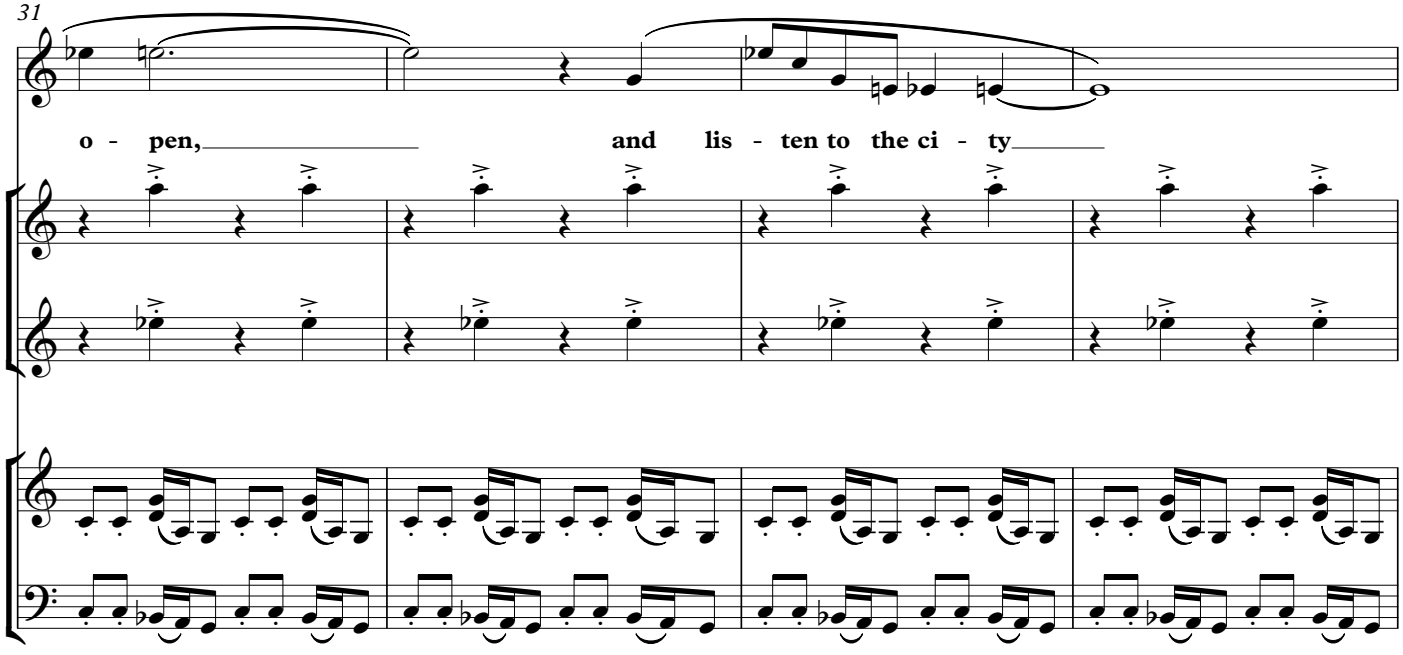

9
they la - ment - ed her sor - ry state,

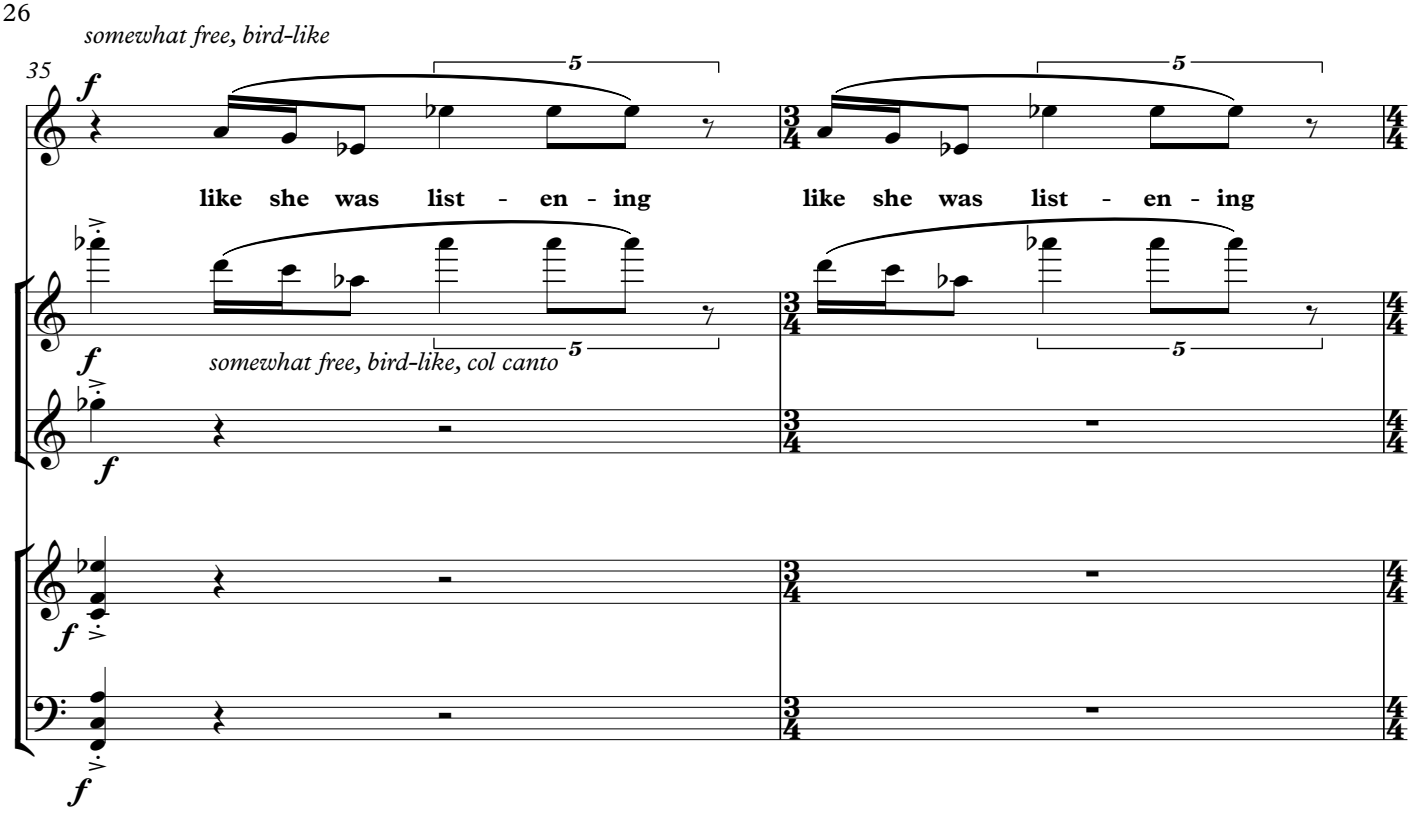

13
hav-ing to live in that lit-tle box
hav-ing no field nor

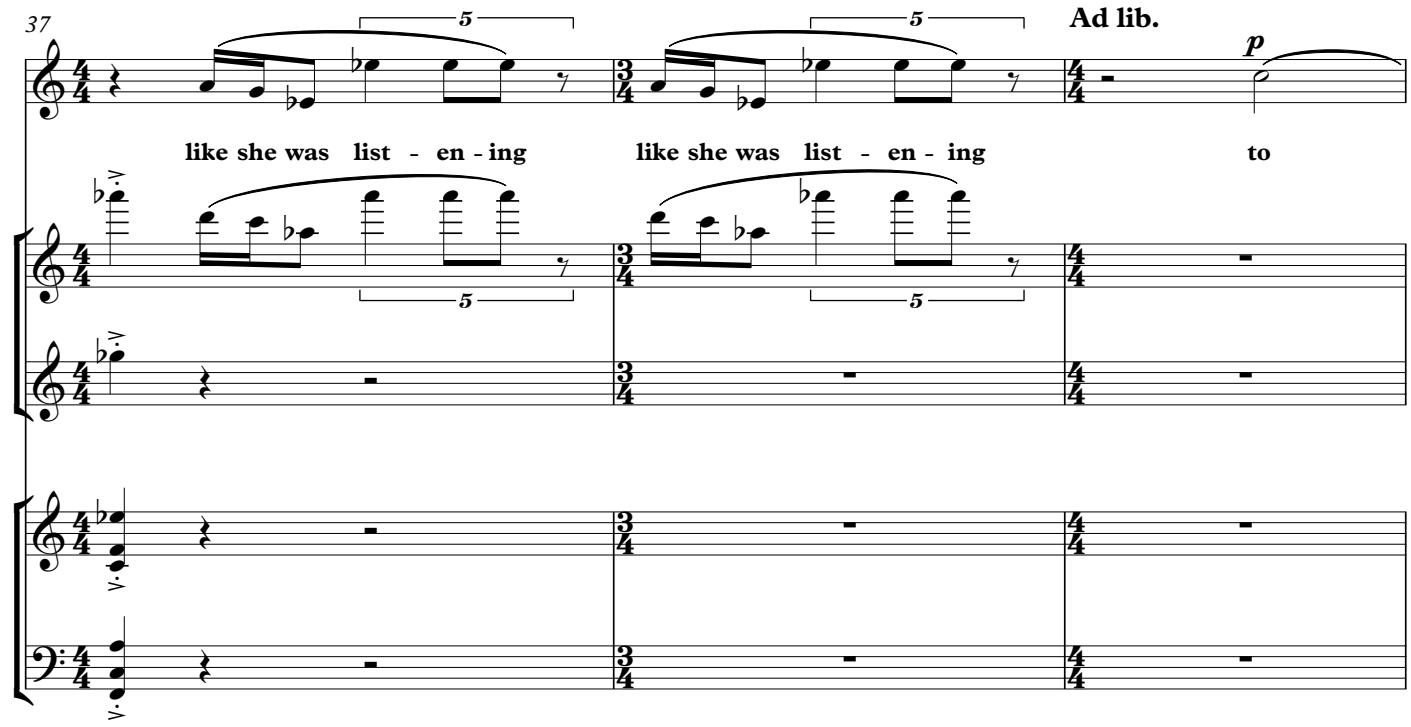

17
3
f
trees, hav-ing no hills to look toward. She ne-ver told them

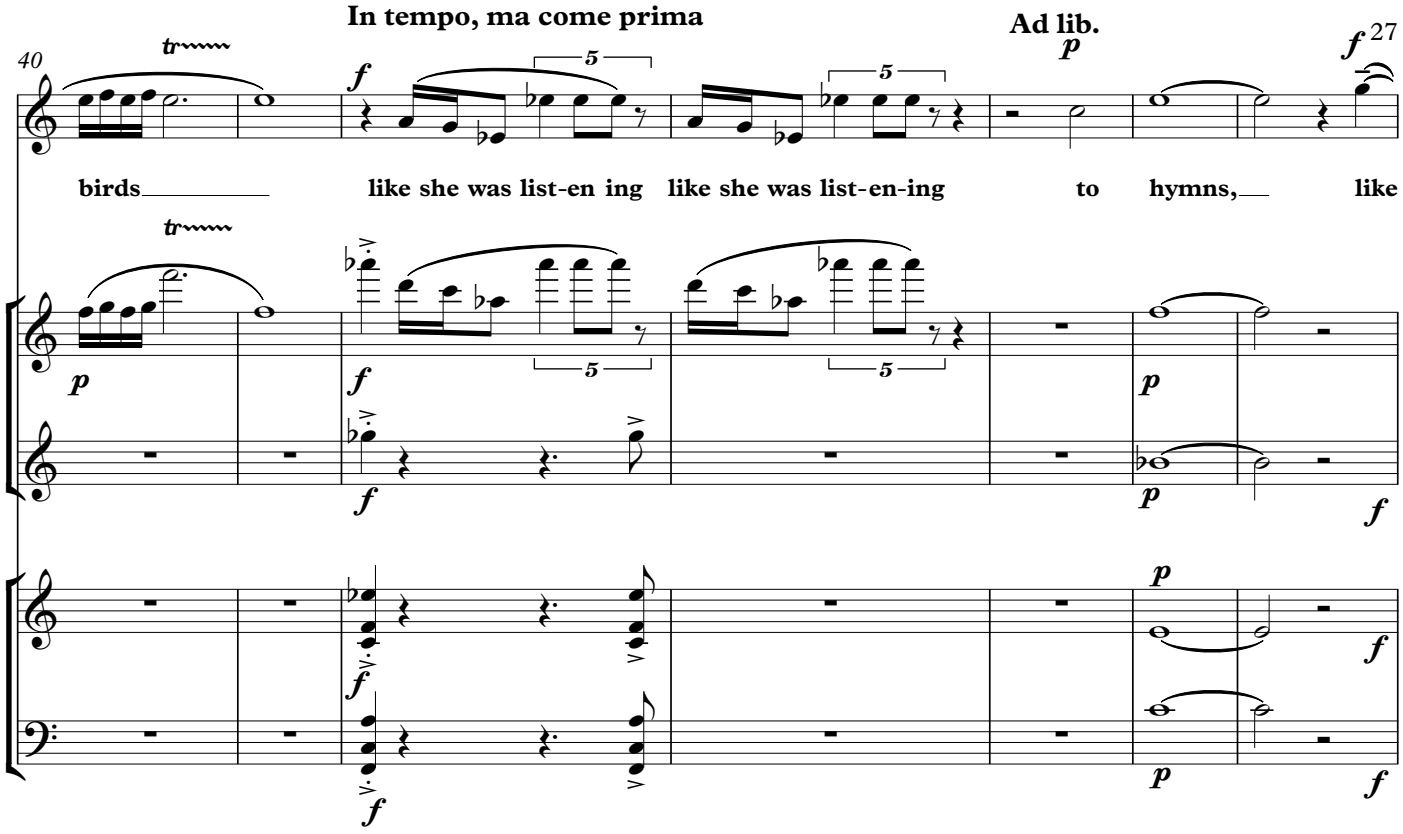

21
3
mf
how she did-n't miss those things, how she would

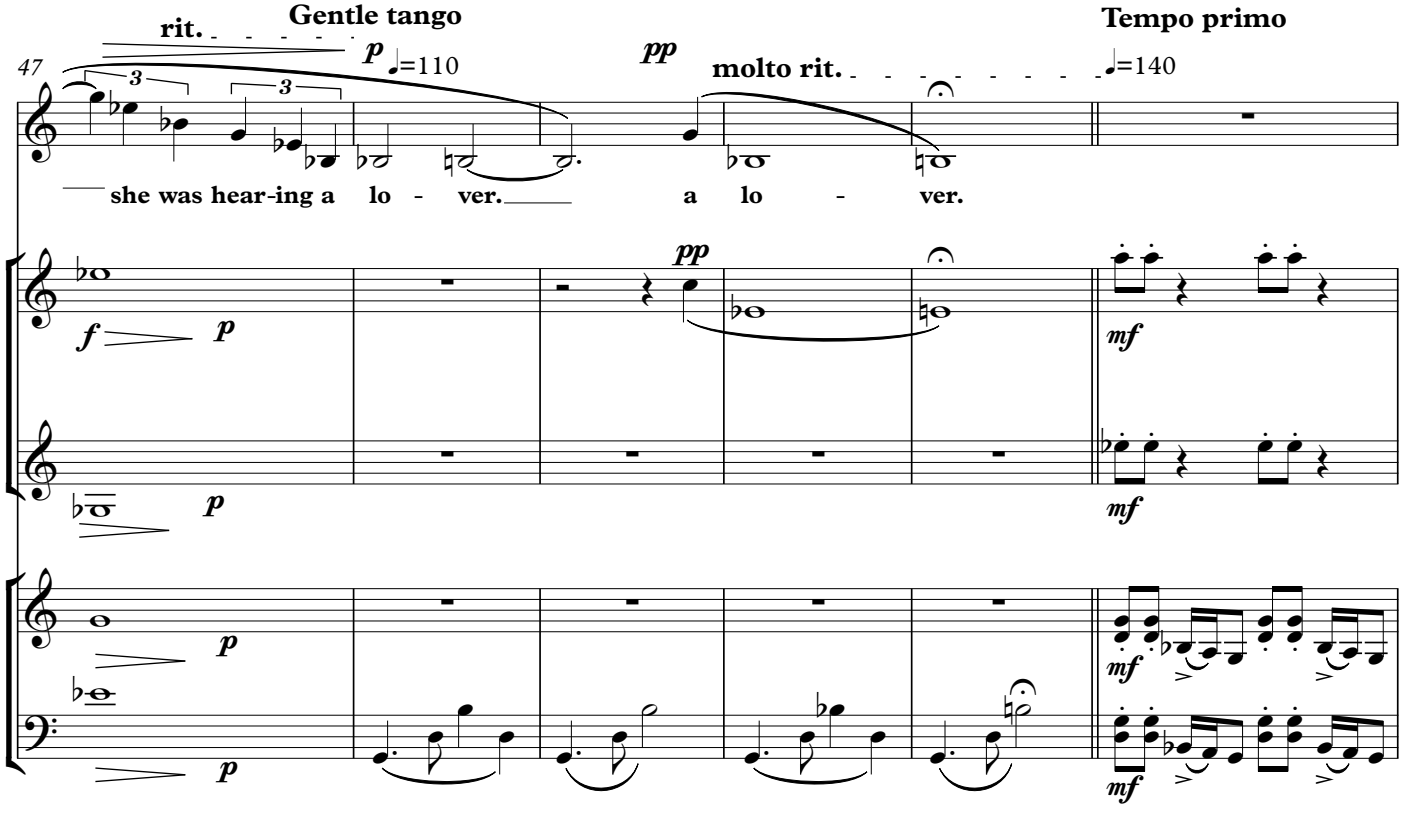

27
like a-wake at night,
her a - part-ment win- dow wide


31
o - pen,
and lis - ten to the ci - ty


somewhat free, bird-like
35
like she was list - en - ing
like she was list - en - ing
somewhat free, bird-like, col canto


37
like she was list - en - ing
like she was list - en - ing
Ad lib.
to


In tempo, ma come prima
Ad lib.
40
27
birds like she was list-en ing like she was list-en-ing to hymns, like


rit.
Gentle tango
Tempo primo
47
molto rit.
=110
=140
she was hear-ing a lo - ver. a lo - ver.

53

mf

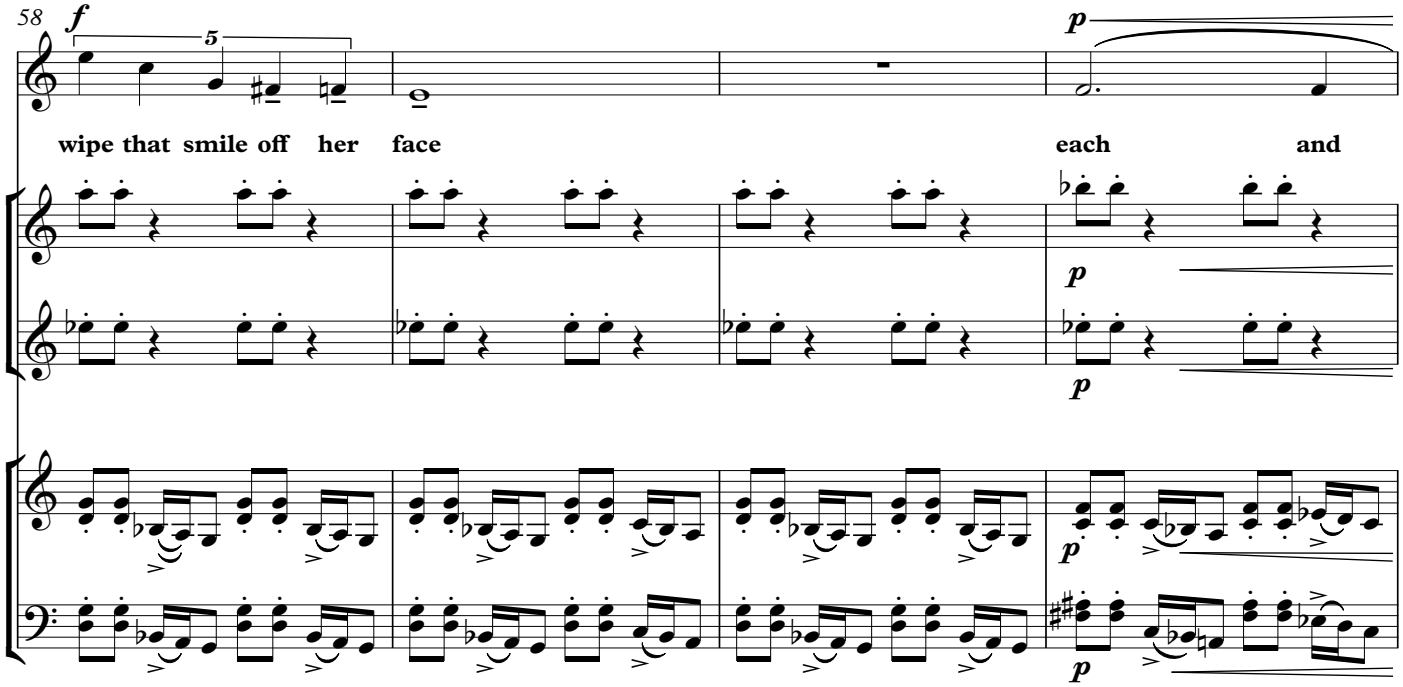
3

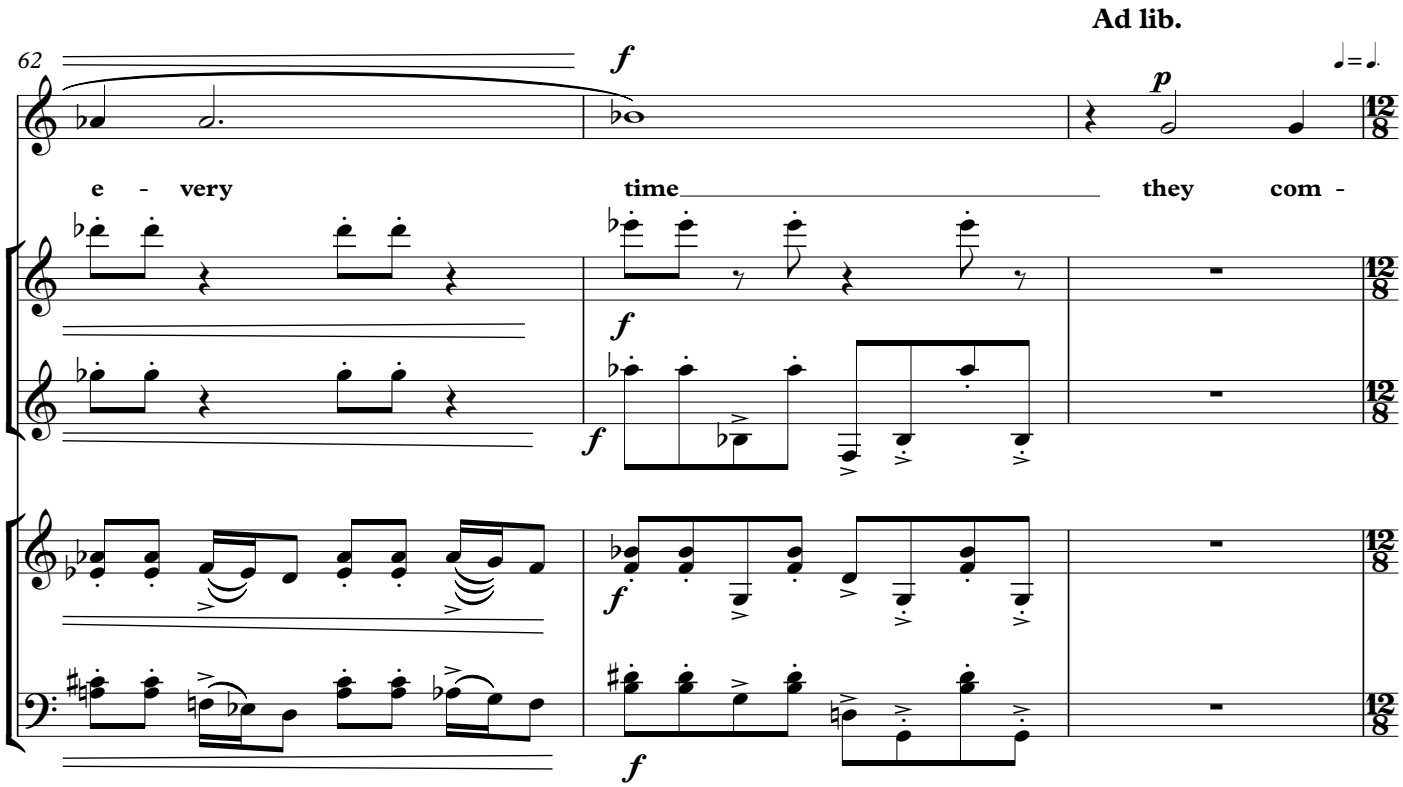
She ne - ver told them

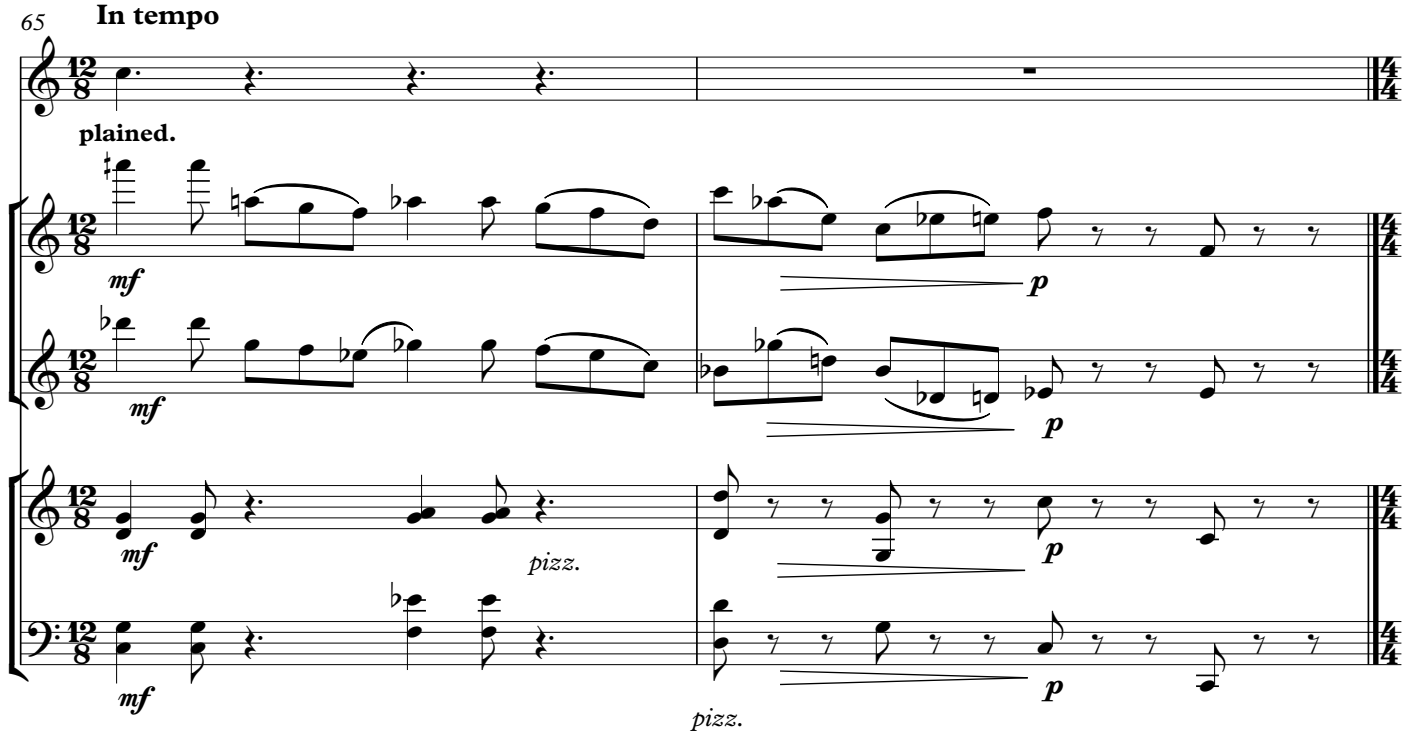
56

3

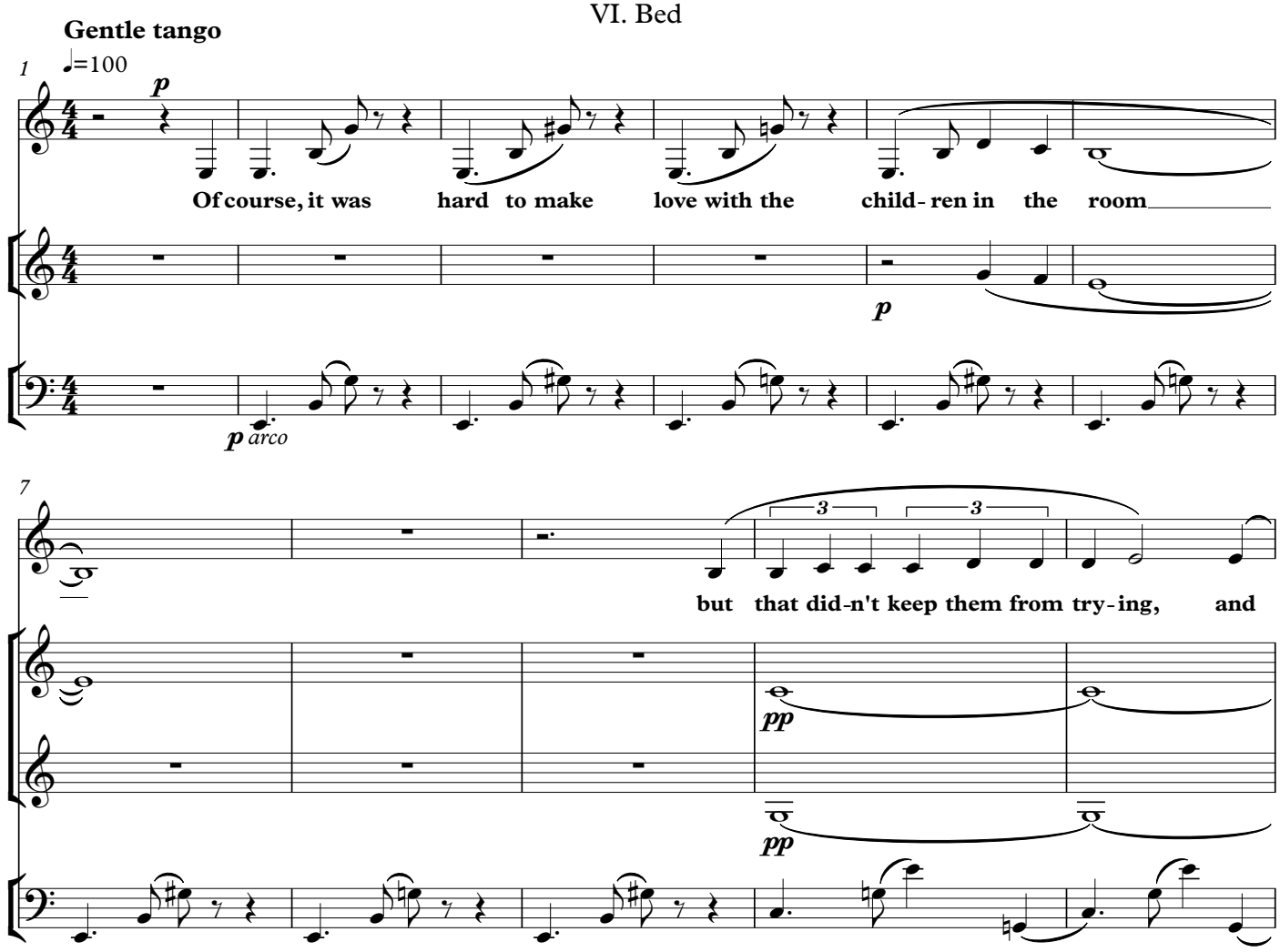
how hard it was to

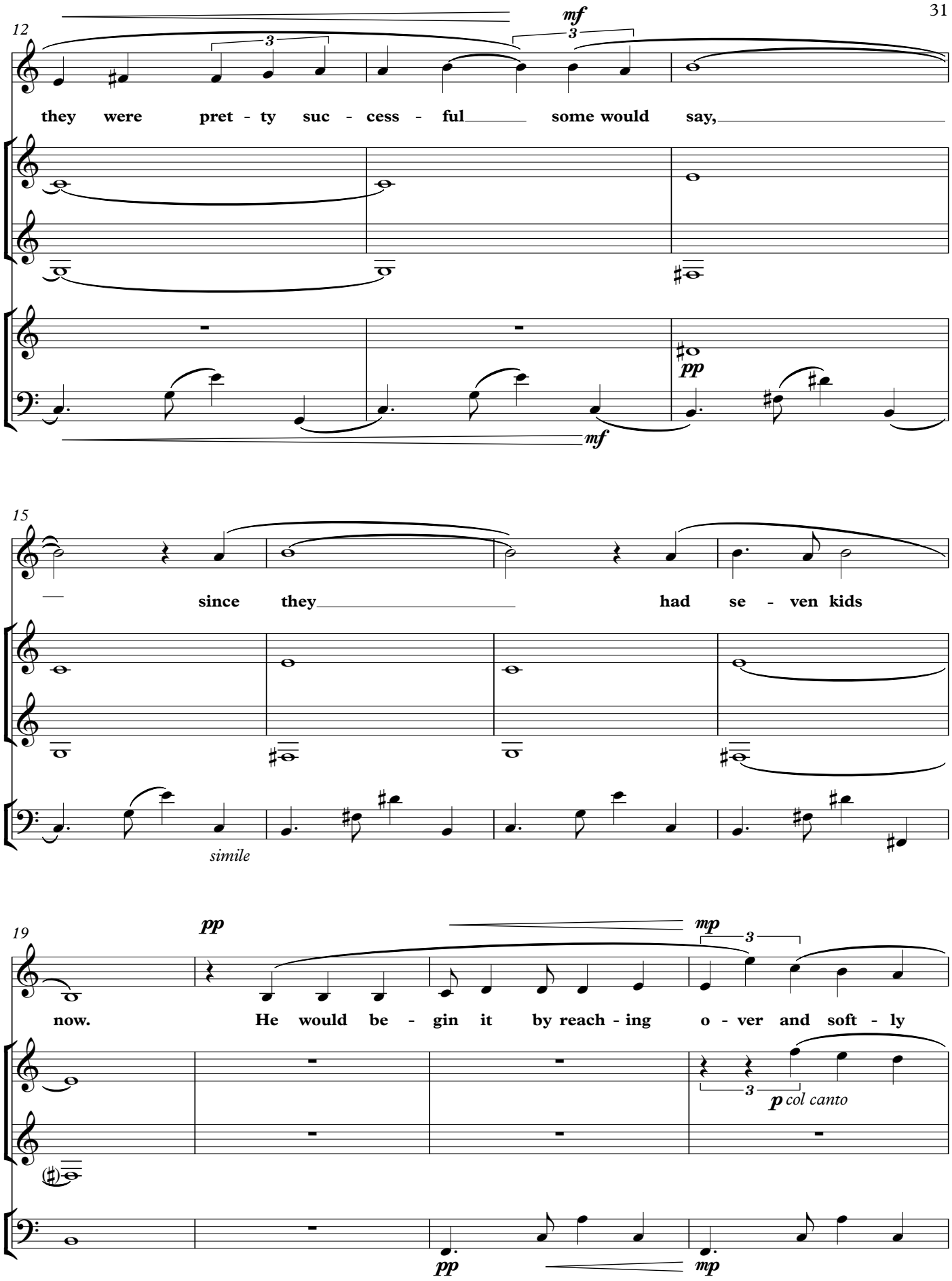

58
f
5
p
wipe that smile off her face
each and
p
p
p
p

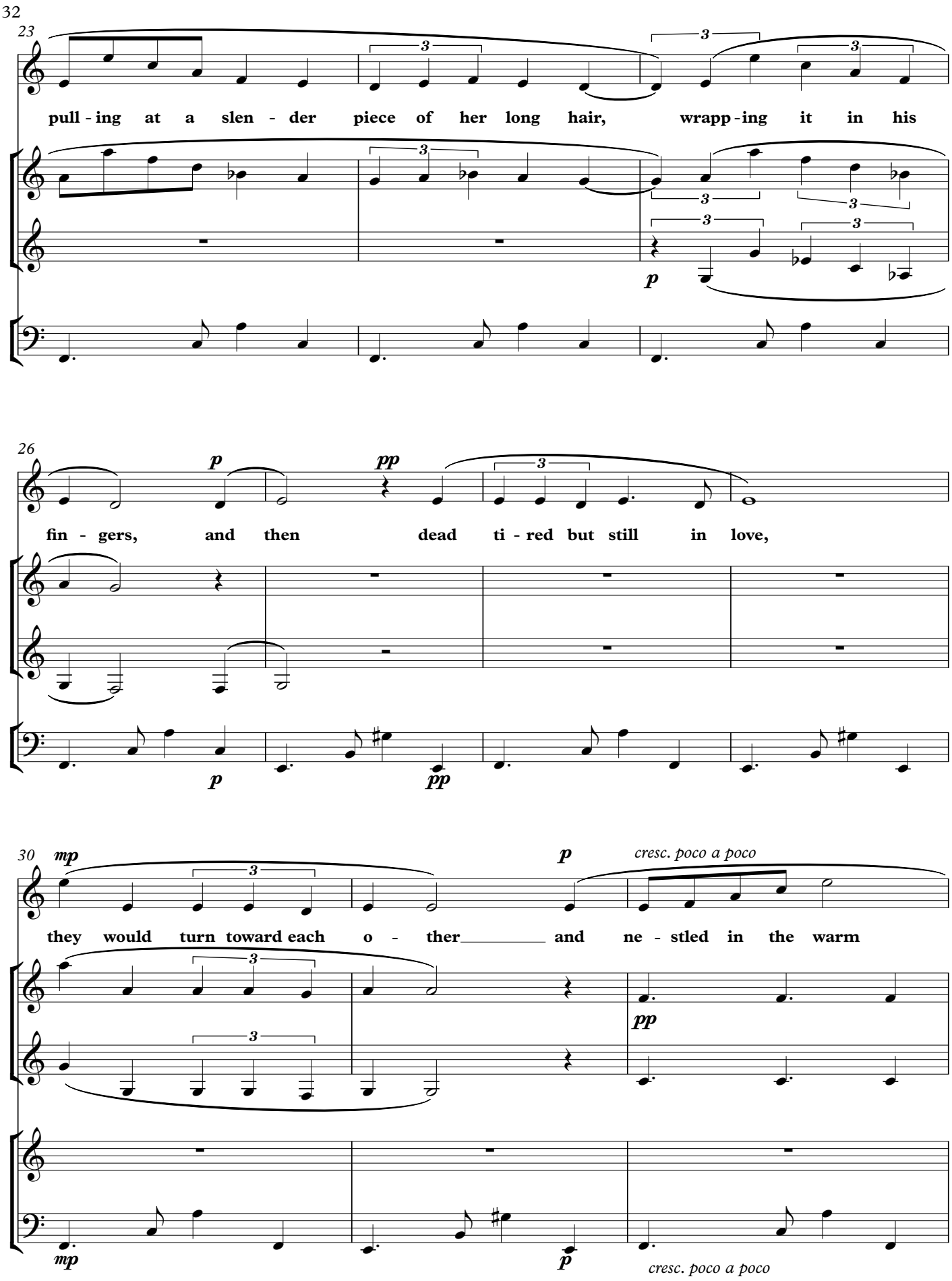

Ad lib.
62
f
p
e - very
time
they com -
f
f
f
f
12/8

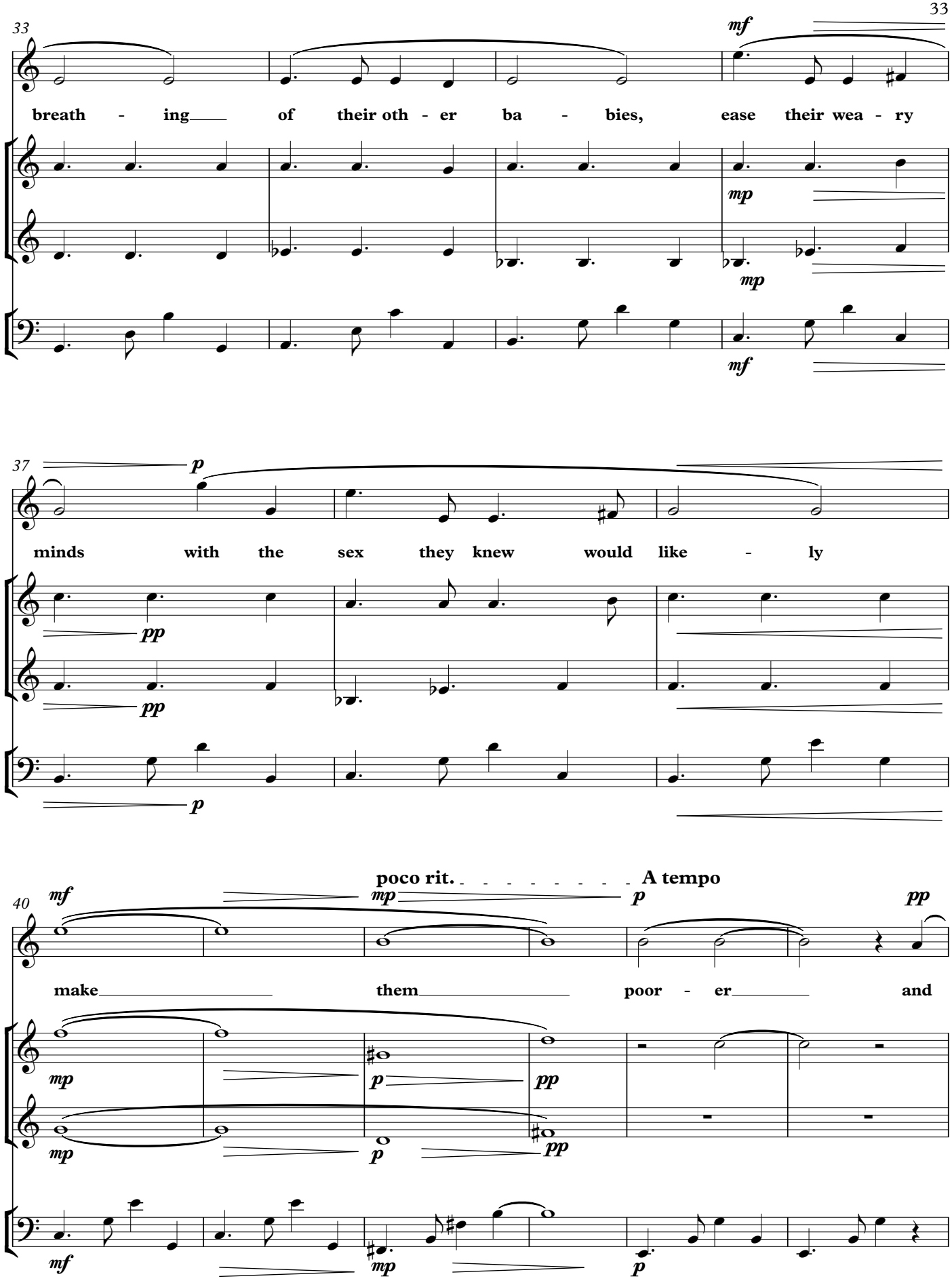

65
In tempo
plained.
mf
p
pizz.

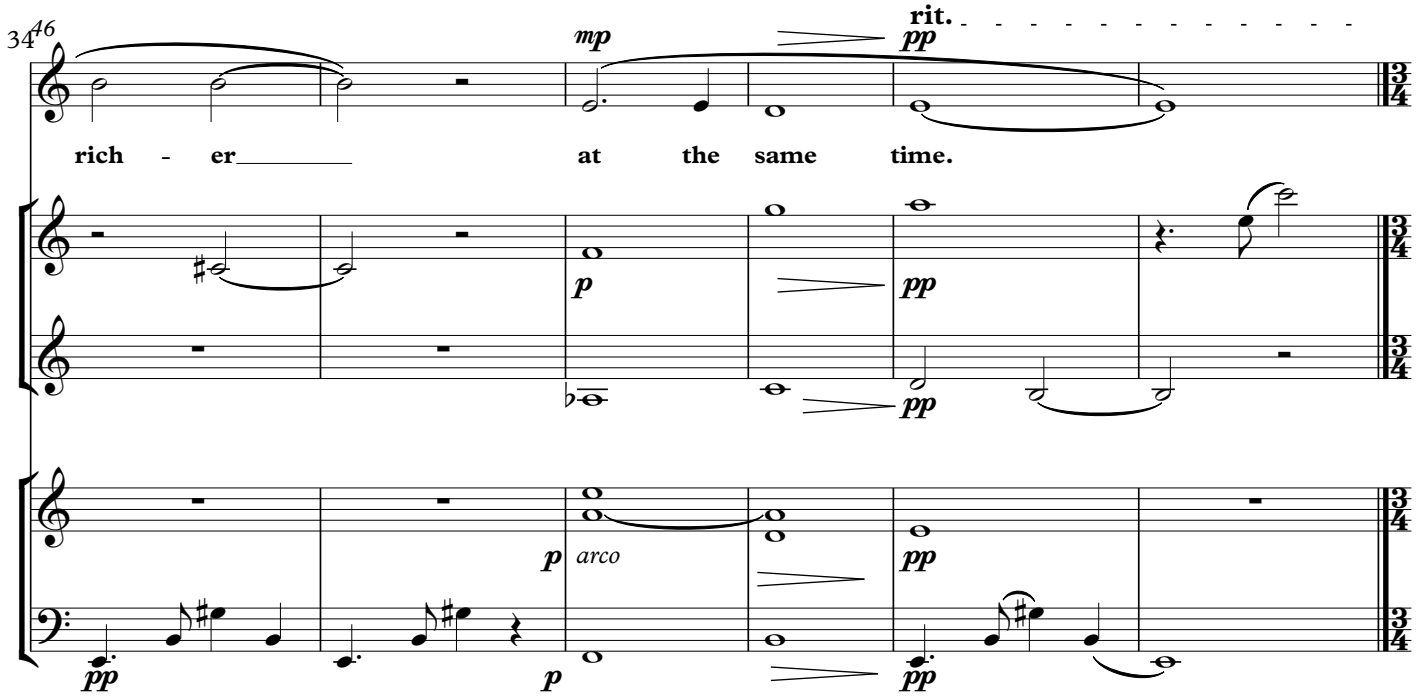
VI. Bed


Gentle tango
1
♩=100
p
Of course, it was hard to make love with the child- ren in the room
arco
7
but that did-n't keep them from try- ing, and
pp

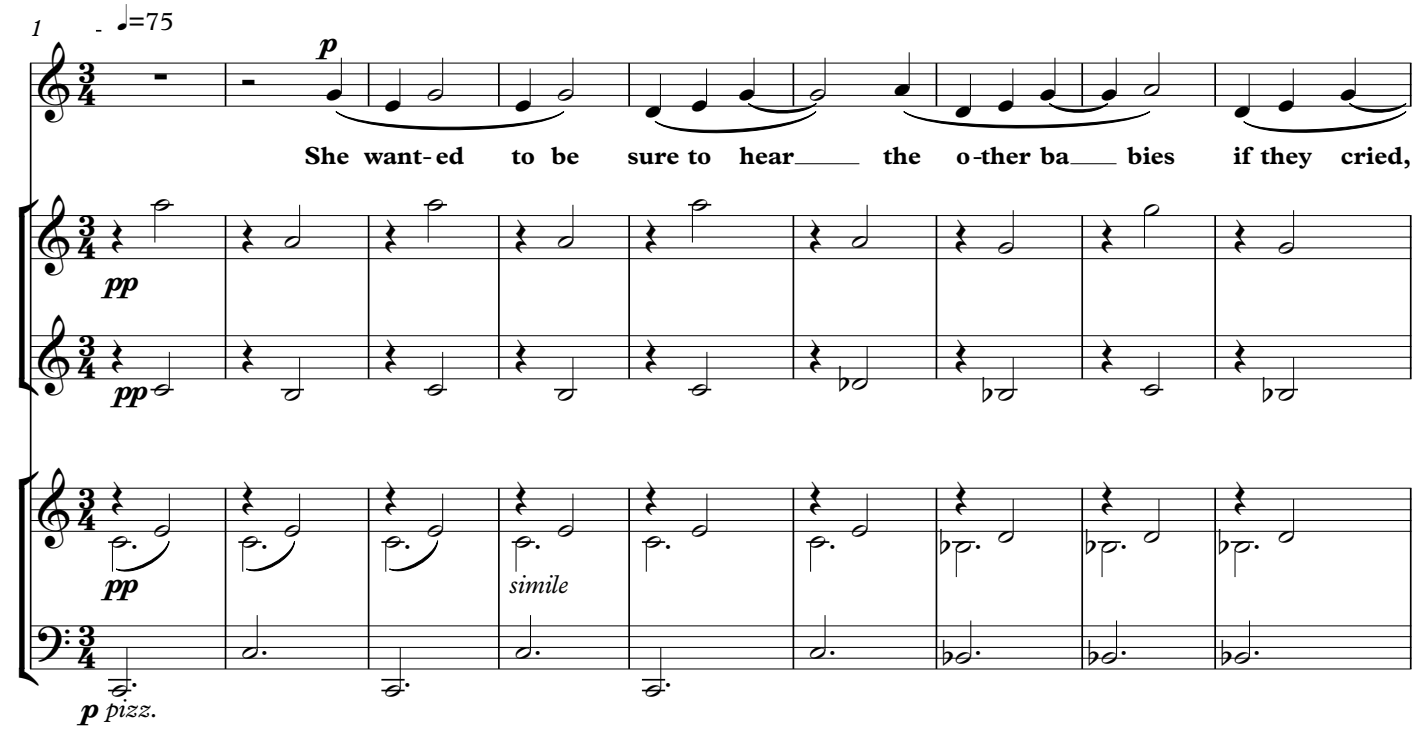

12
mf
3
they were pret - ty suc - cess - ful some would say,
pp
mf
15
since they had se - ven kids
simile
19
pp
mp
3
now. He would be - gin it by reach - ing o - ver and soft - ly
3
p col canto
pp
mp

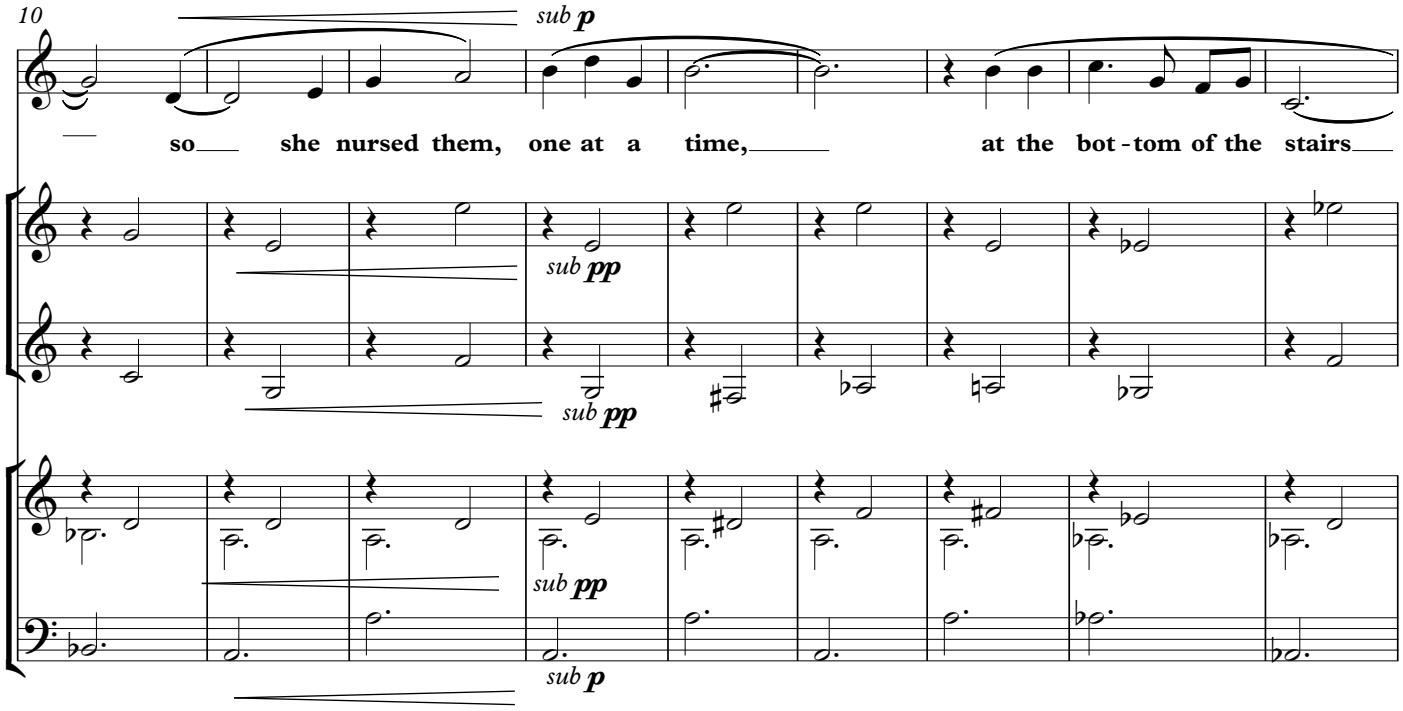

23
pull - ing at a slen - der piece of her long hair, wrapp - ing it in his
p
26
fin - gers, and then dead ti - red but still in love,
p
pp
30
they would turn toward each o - ther and ne - stled in the warm
mp
p
cresc. poco a poco
pp

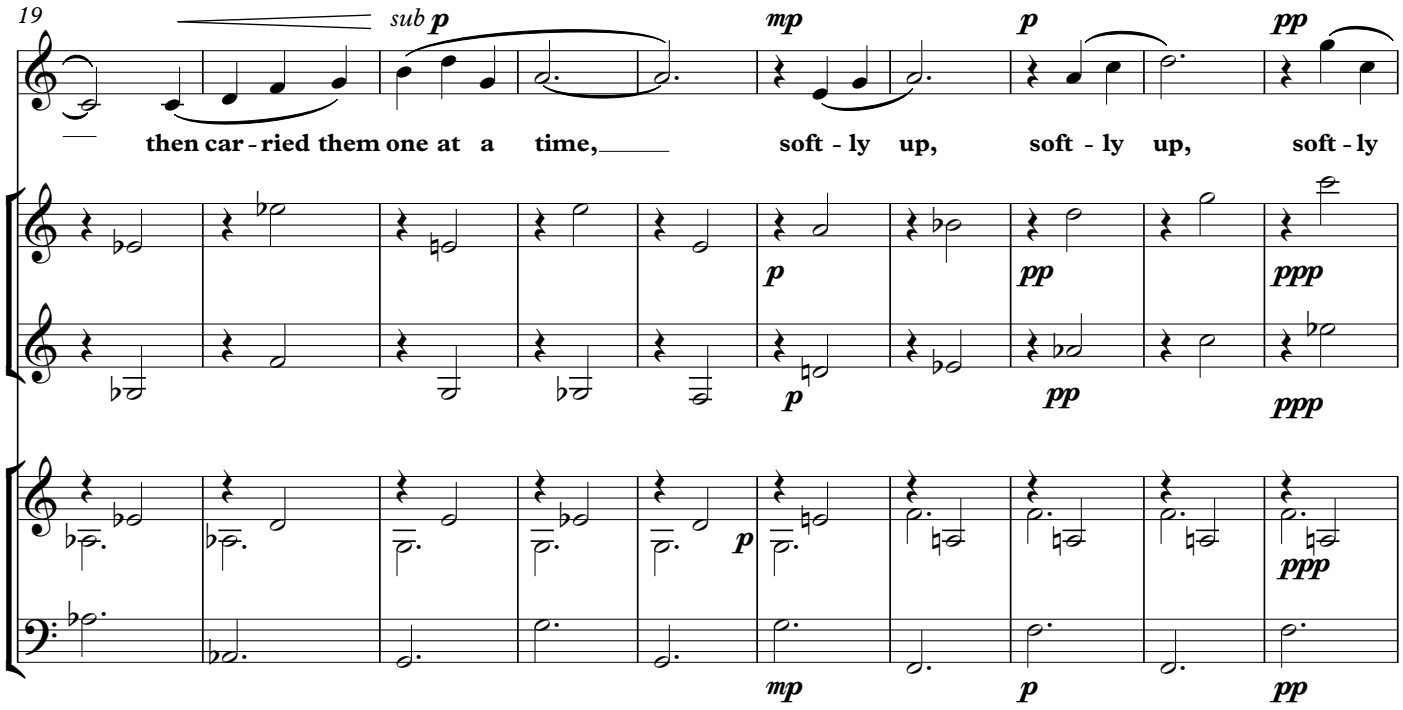

33
mf
breath - ing of their oth - er ba - bies, ease their wea - ry
mp
mp
mf
37
p
minds with the sex they knew would like - ly
pp
pp
p
poco rit.
A tempo
40
mf
mp
p
pp
make them poor - er and
mp
p
pp
mp
p
pp
mf
mp
p


34 46
rit.
mp
pp
rich - er
at the same time.
p
pp
p
arco
pp
pp
p
pp

VII. Rocker


Gently rocking
1
♩=75
p
She want-ed to be sure to hear the o-ther ba bies if they cried,
pp
pp
pp
simile
p pizz.


10
sub p
so she nursed them, one at a time, at the bot - tom of the stairs
sub pp
sub pp
sub pp
sub p


19
sub p
mp
p
pp
then car - ried them one at a time, soft - ly up, soft - ly up, soft - ly
p
pp
ppp
p
pp
ppp
p
ppp
mp
p
pp

29

poco rit.

p

up, their small hearts beat - ing.

pp

pp

pp

p

A tempo

37

poco rit.

ppp

ppp

ppp

pp