For D. Elliott Wilbur
Commissioned by Ariel Pisturino & Ginnie Wilbur Miller

DEWDROPS:

Songs for D. Elliott Wilbur

mezzo soprano & electric guitar

Alexander Elliott Miller

Dewdrops: Songs for D. Elliott Wilbur (2017)
Alexander Elliott Miller

Duration: 15 minutes

PROGRAM NOTE
Dewdrops is a collection of songs composed in honor of my grandfather, D. Elliott Wilbur. Dually commissioned by mezzo soprano Ariel Pisturino, and by my mother, Ginnie Wilbur Miller, in honor of her father, the collection includes settings of three poems with some significance to my grandfather's life, for voice and electric guitar.

Each of the three settings includes musical motives and melodic shapes composed by my grandfather. He took a music theory class as an elective in college in the 1940's, loved jazz and Bach, and was a talented boogie-woogie pianist, drummer and member of the church choir. After my grandfather's passing in 2012, my grandmother found a number of his theory assignments and Baroque-style composition projects. She shared these old documents with me, and from them I then took melodic excerpts and bits to modify and re-harmonize in my own settings.

All three of the settings include these variations and adaptations of my grandfather's melodies, in fact, most of the soprano part can be related to his melodies in some way or another. It is from this compositional process, and from his initials, that the work gets its title "Dewdrops."

TEXTS
Public Domain

Hope is the thing with feathers
- Emily Dickinson

Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul,
And sings the tune without the words,
And never stops at all,

And sweetest in the gale is heard;
And sore must be the storm
That could abash the little bird
That kept so many warm

I've heard it in the chillest land,
And on the strangest sea;
Yet, never, in extremity,
It asked a crumb of me.

One bright day in the middle of the night
- unknown

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Beggars and Tramps,
Cross-eyed mosquitos and bow legged ants,
Pull up a chair and sit on the floor
And I'll tell you a story you've never heard before.

One bright day in the middle of the night
Two dead boys got up to fight
Back to back they faced each other
Drew their swords and shot each other

One was blind and the other couldn't see
So they chose a dummy for a referee.
A blind man went to see fair play
A dumb man went to shout "hooray!"

A stone-deaf sheriff heard the noise,
And came and save those two dead boys.
The mute psychotic shrieked in fright,
With words of joy at this ghastly sight.

Now if you doubt this lie is true?
Ask the blind man; he saw it, too."

The Lake Isle of Innisfree
- William Butler Yeats

I arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;
Nine bean rows will I have there, a hive for the honey bee,
And live alone in the bee loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

For D. Elliott Wilbur,

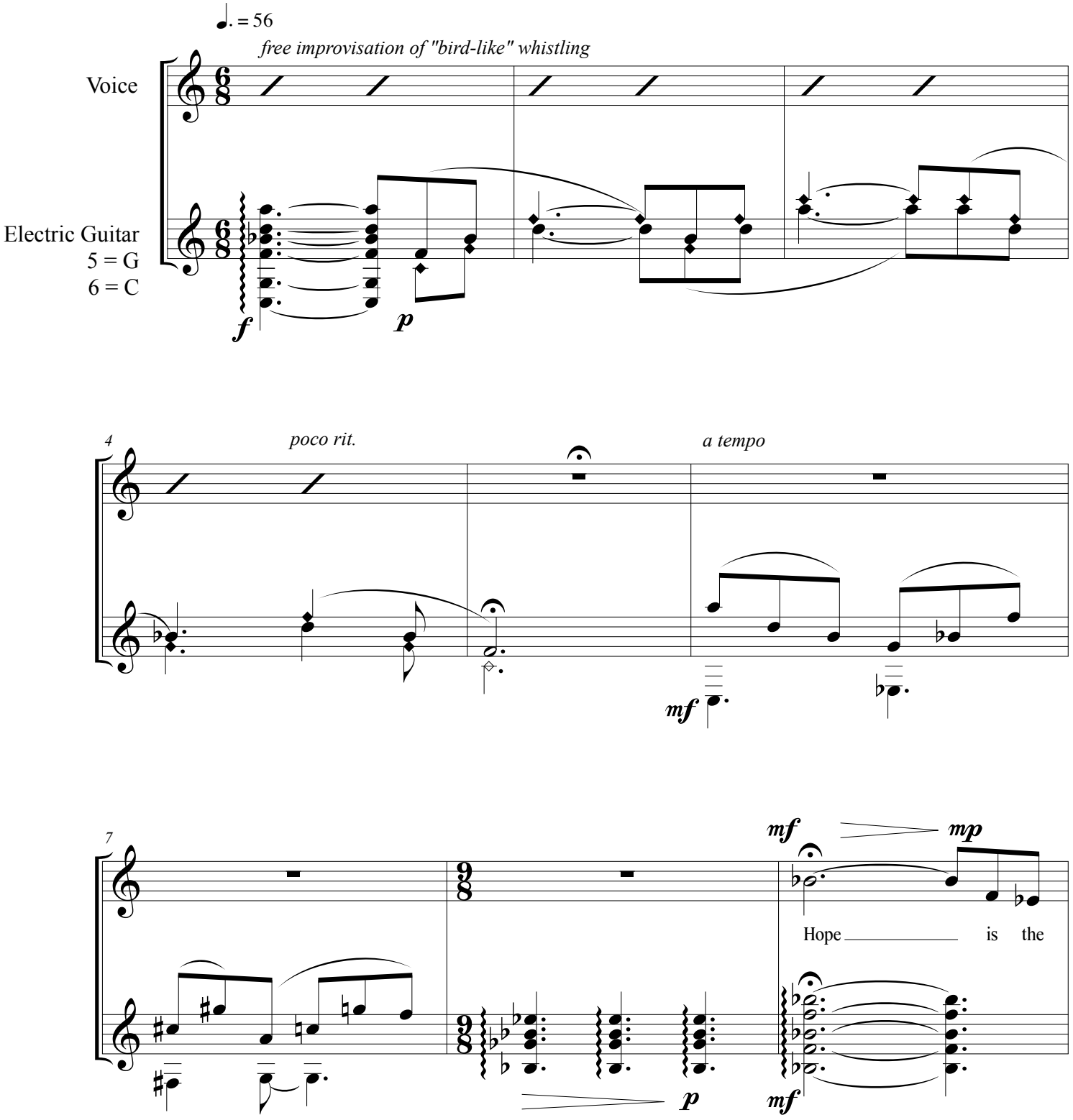
Commissioned by Ariel Pisturino & Ginnie Miller

DEWDROPS:
Songs for D. Elliott Wilbur

mezzo soprano & electric guitar

I. Hope is the thing with feathers... - Emily Dickinson

Alexander Elliott Miller



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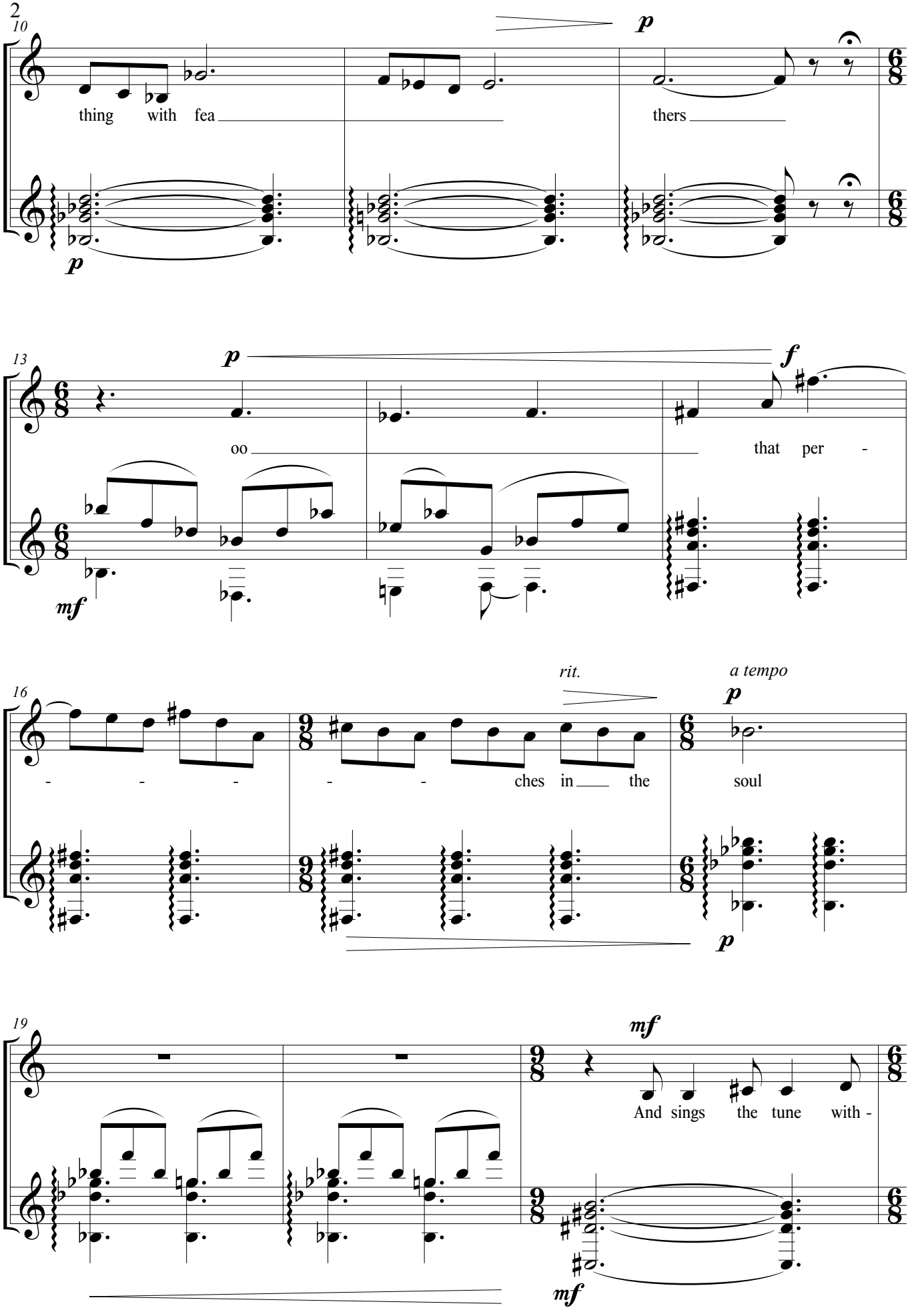
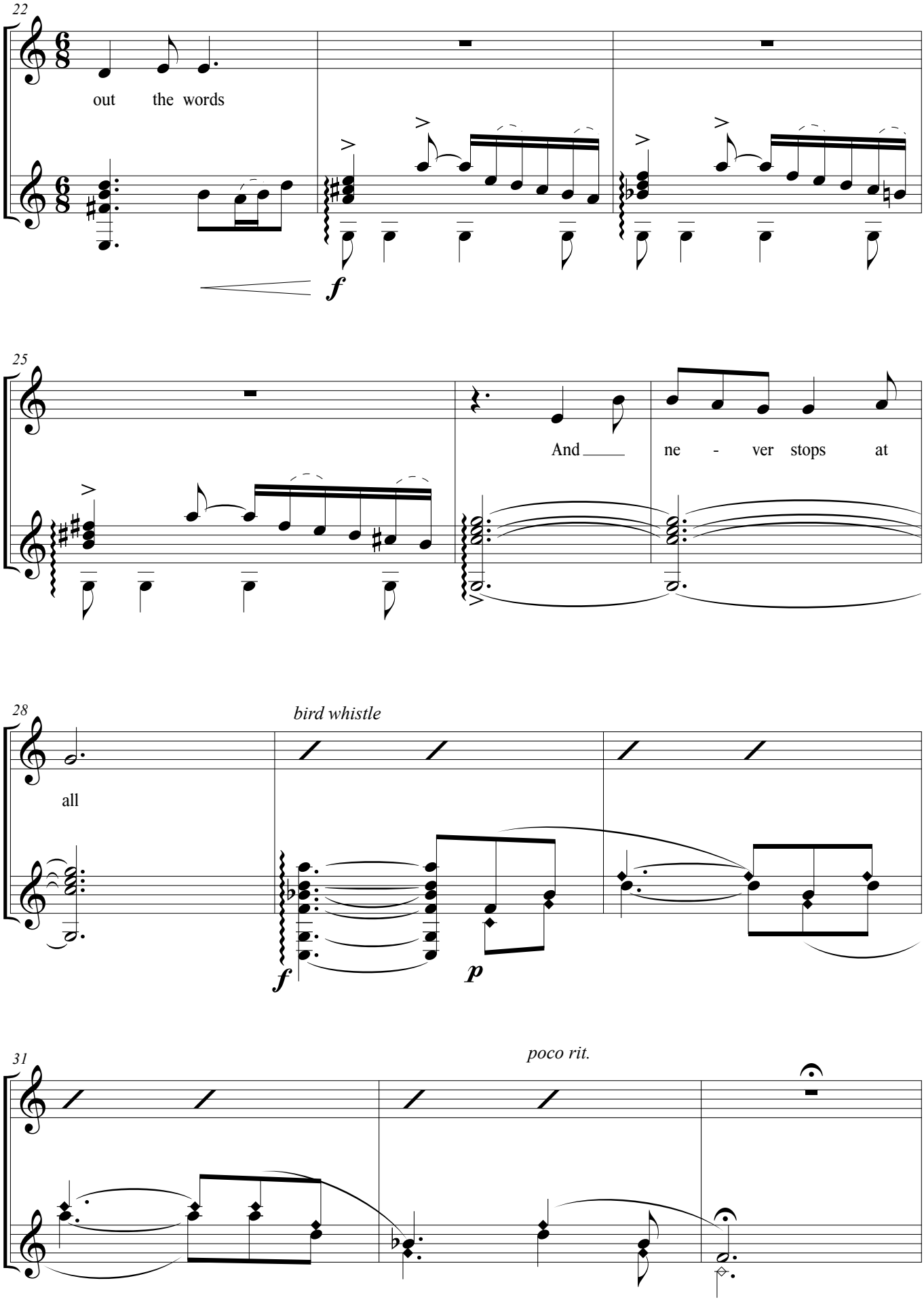
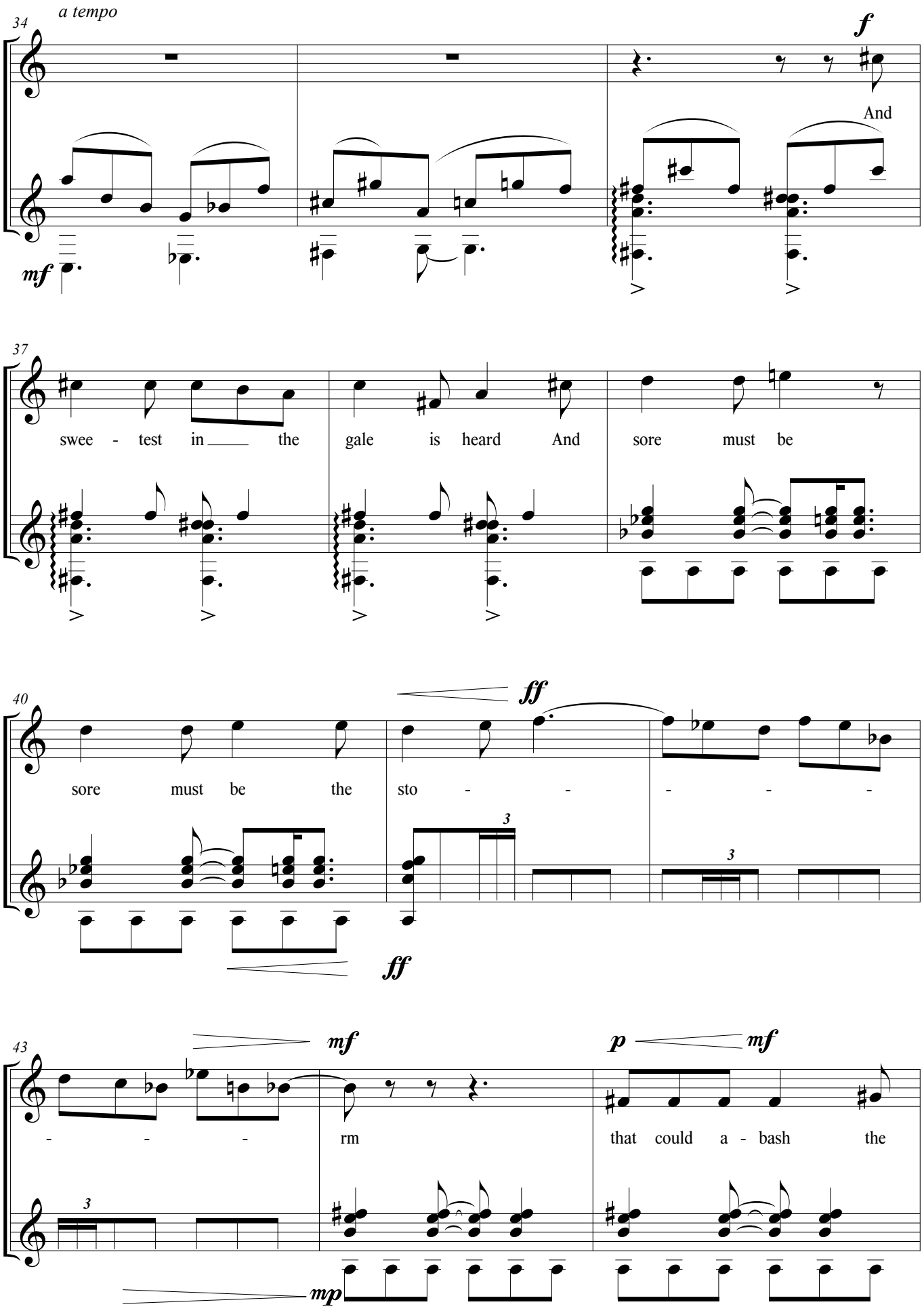
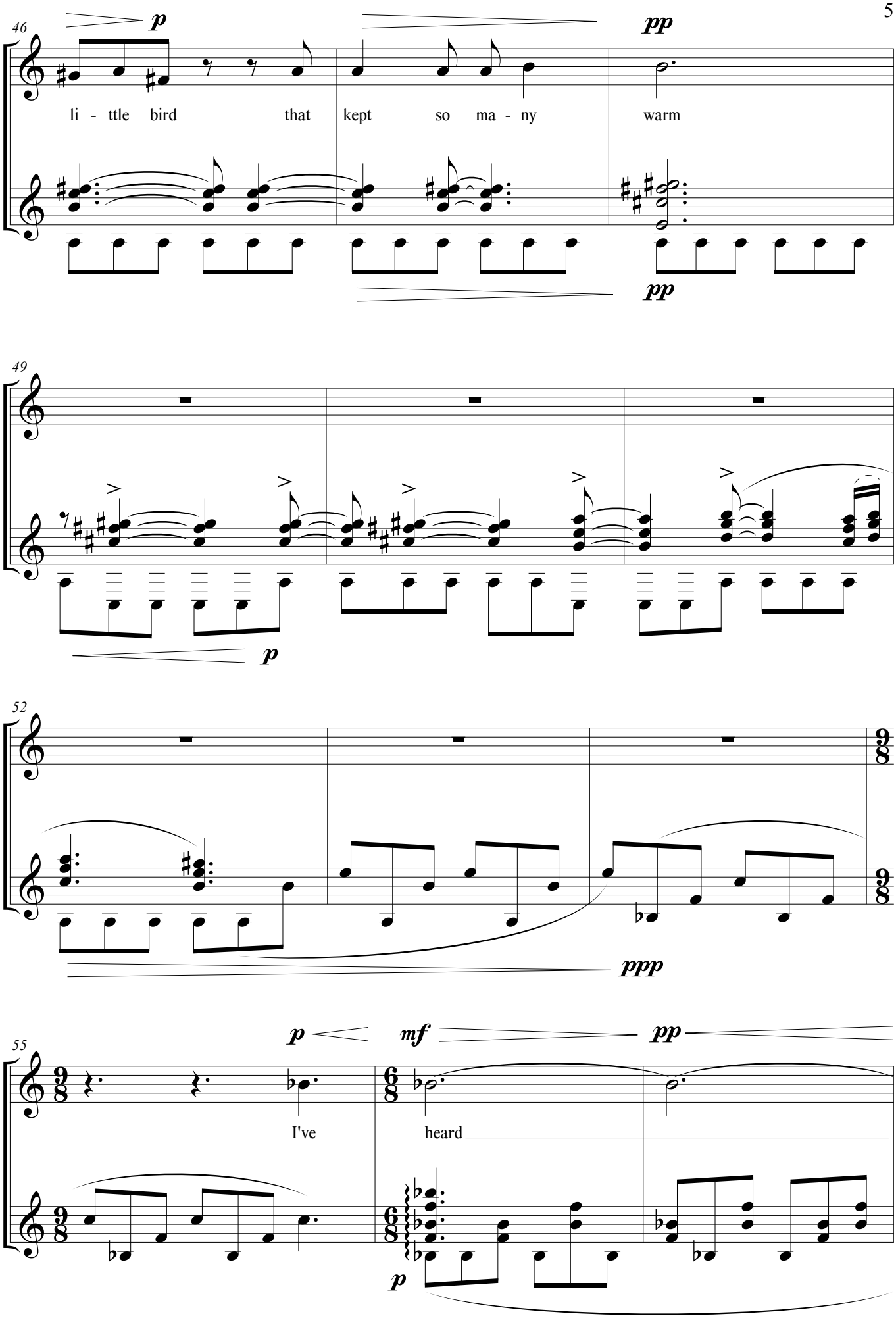
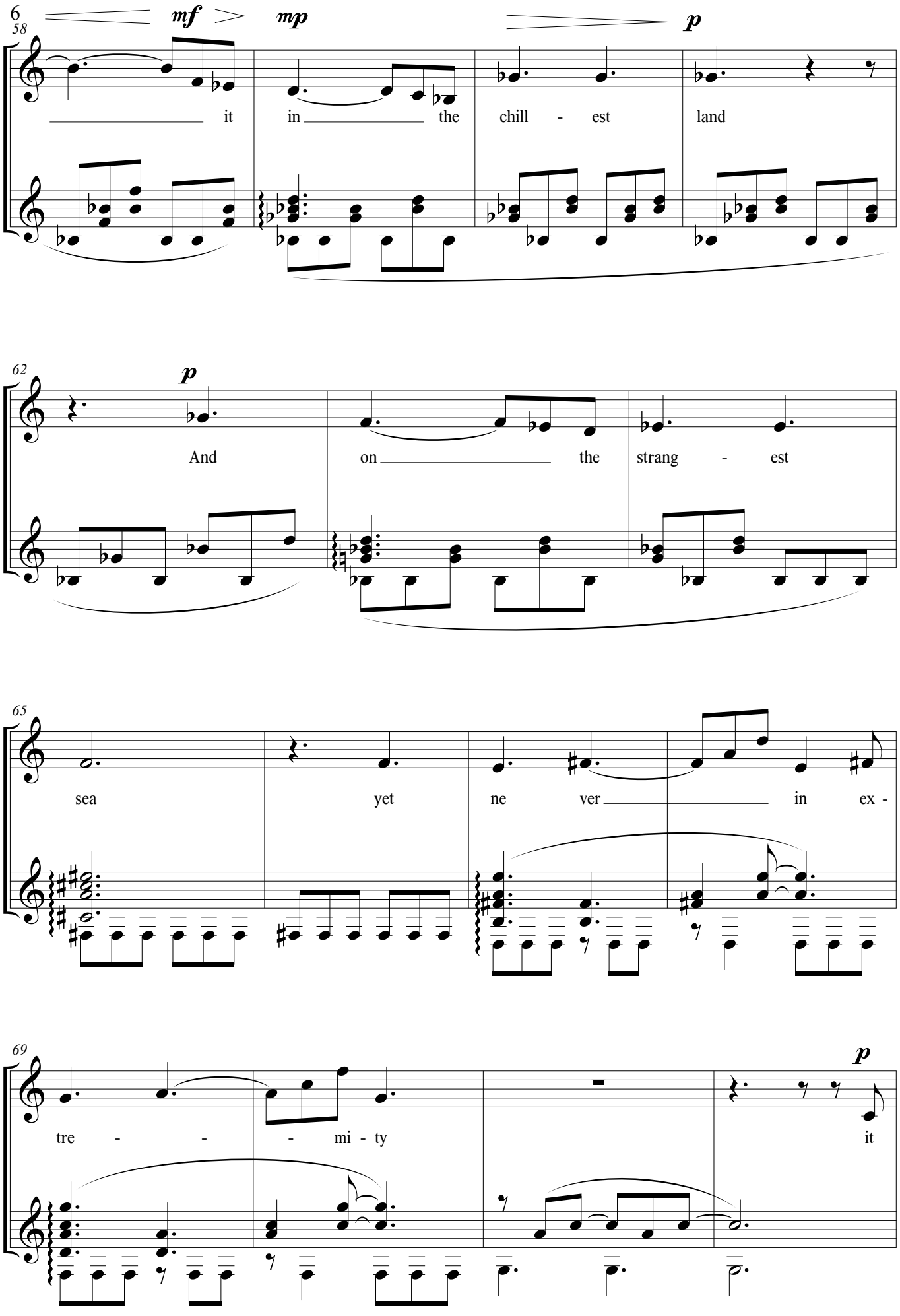
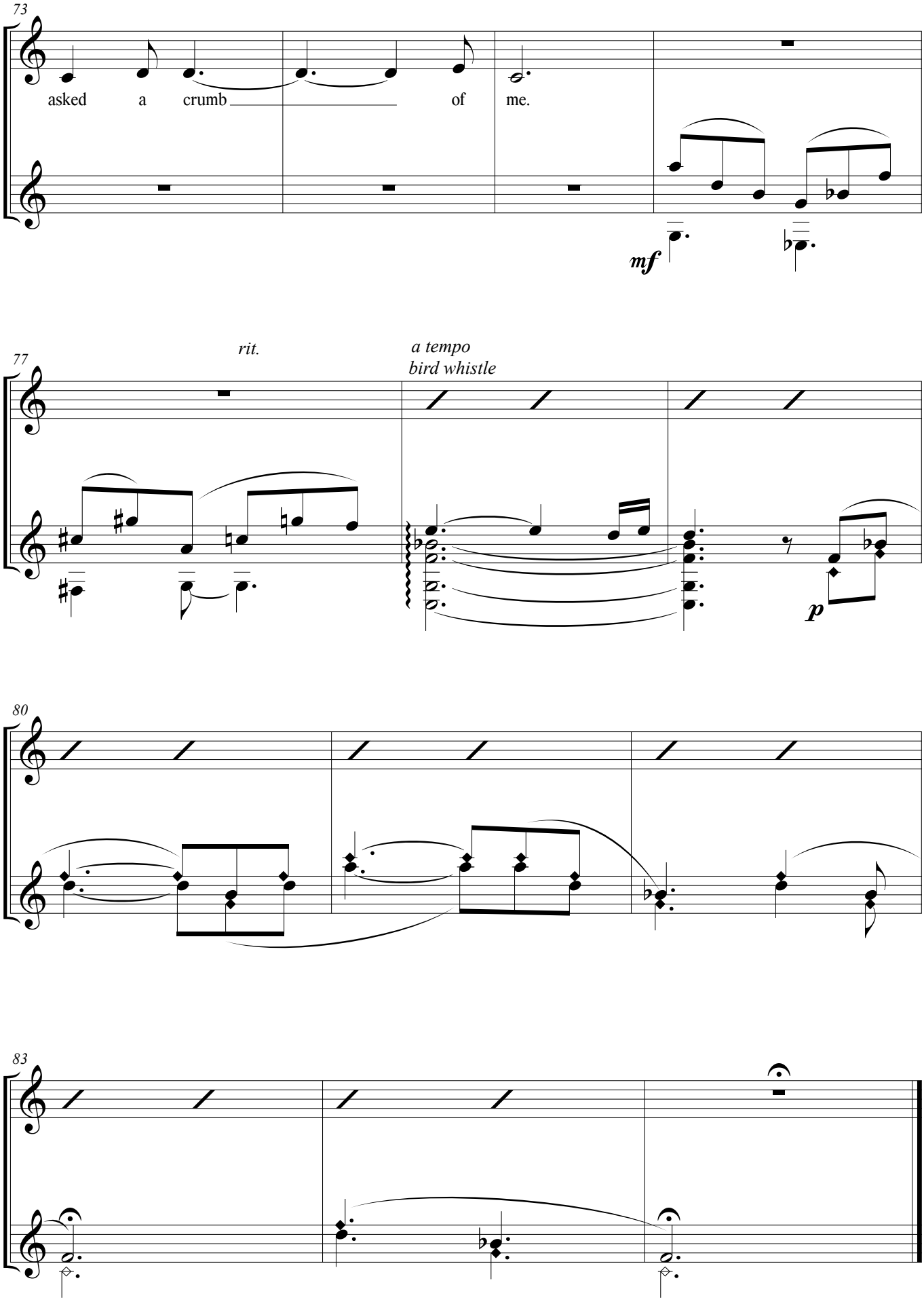

10
p
thing with fea
thers
p
13
p
f
oo
that per -
mf
16
rit.
a tempo
p
- - - - - ches in the soul
p
19
mf
And sings the tune with -
mf


22
out the words
f
25
And ne - ver stops at
28
bird whistle
all
f
p
31
poco rit.

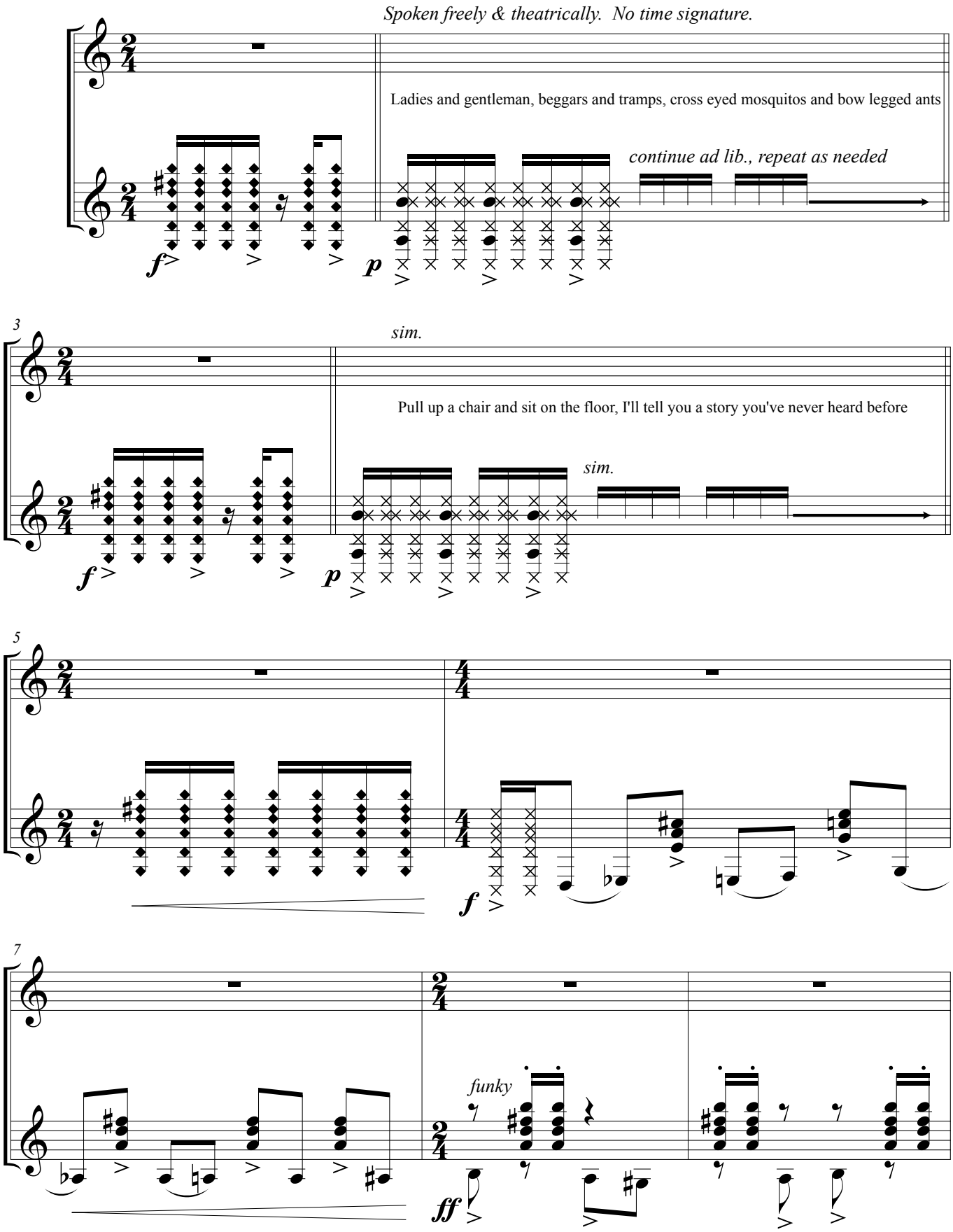

a tempo
34
f
And
mf
37
swee - test in the gale is heard And sore must be
40
ff
sore must be the sto - - - - -
3
3
ff
43
mf
p
mf
- - - rm that could a - bash the
3
mp

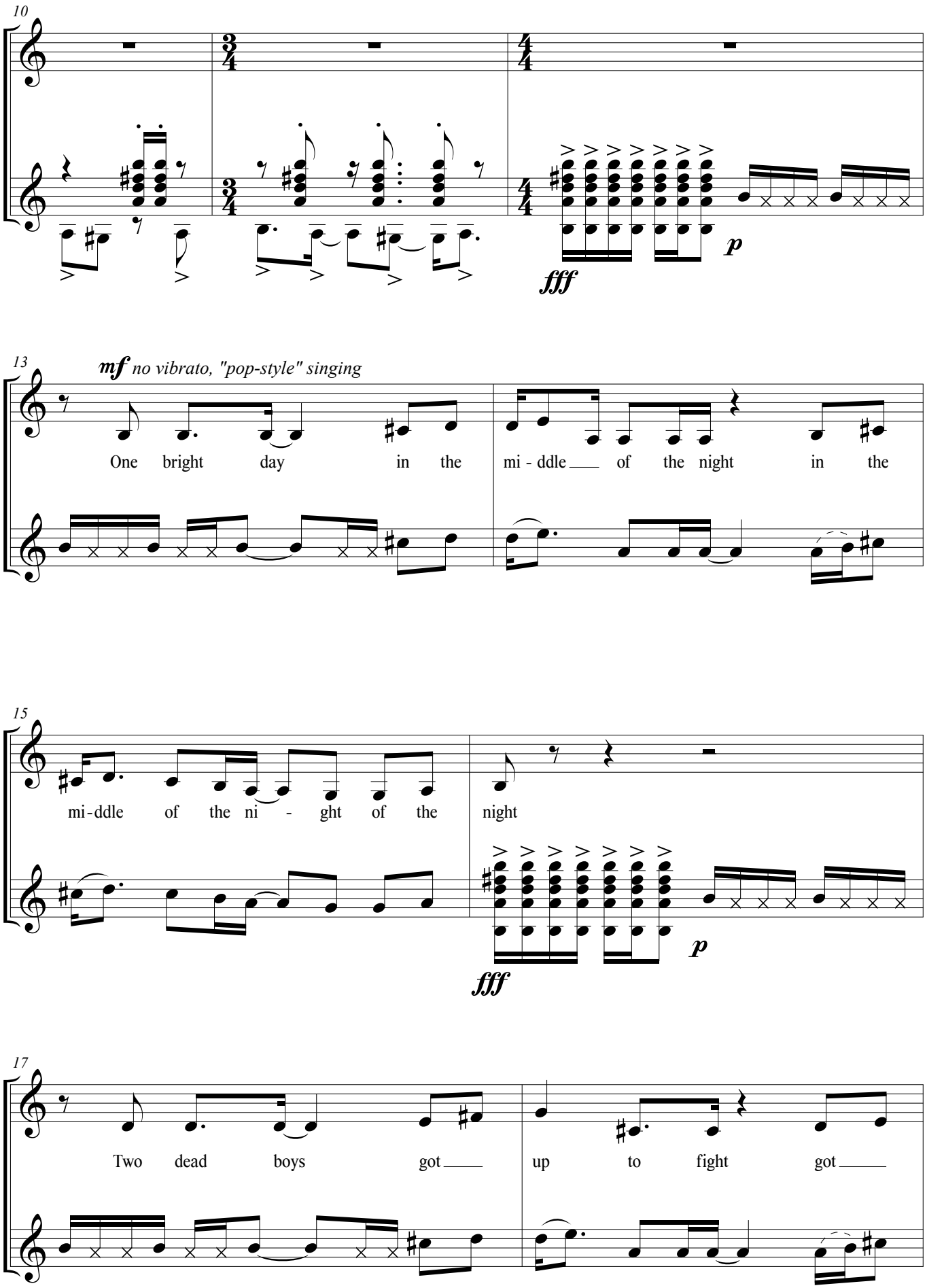

46
p
pp
li - ttle bird that kept so ma - ny warm
pp
49
p
52
ppp
55
p
mf
pp
I've heard
p

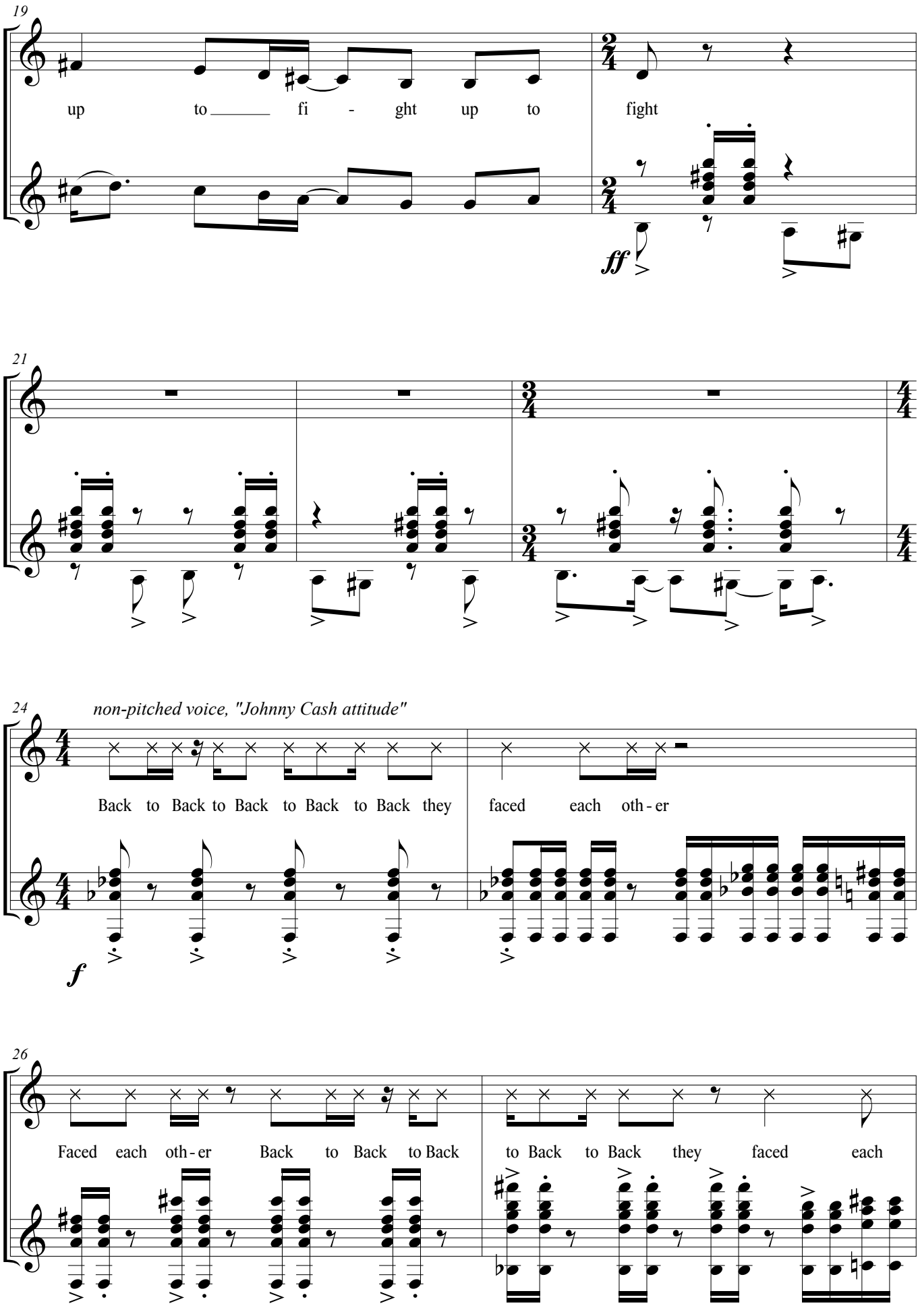

58
mf
mp
p
it in the chill - est land
62
p
And on the strang - est
65
sea yet ne ver in ex -
69
p
tre - - - mi - ty it

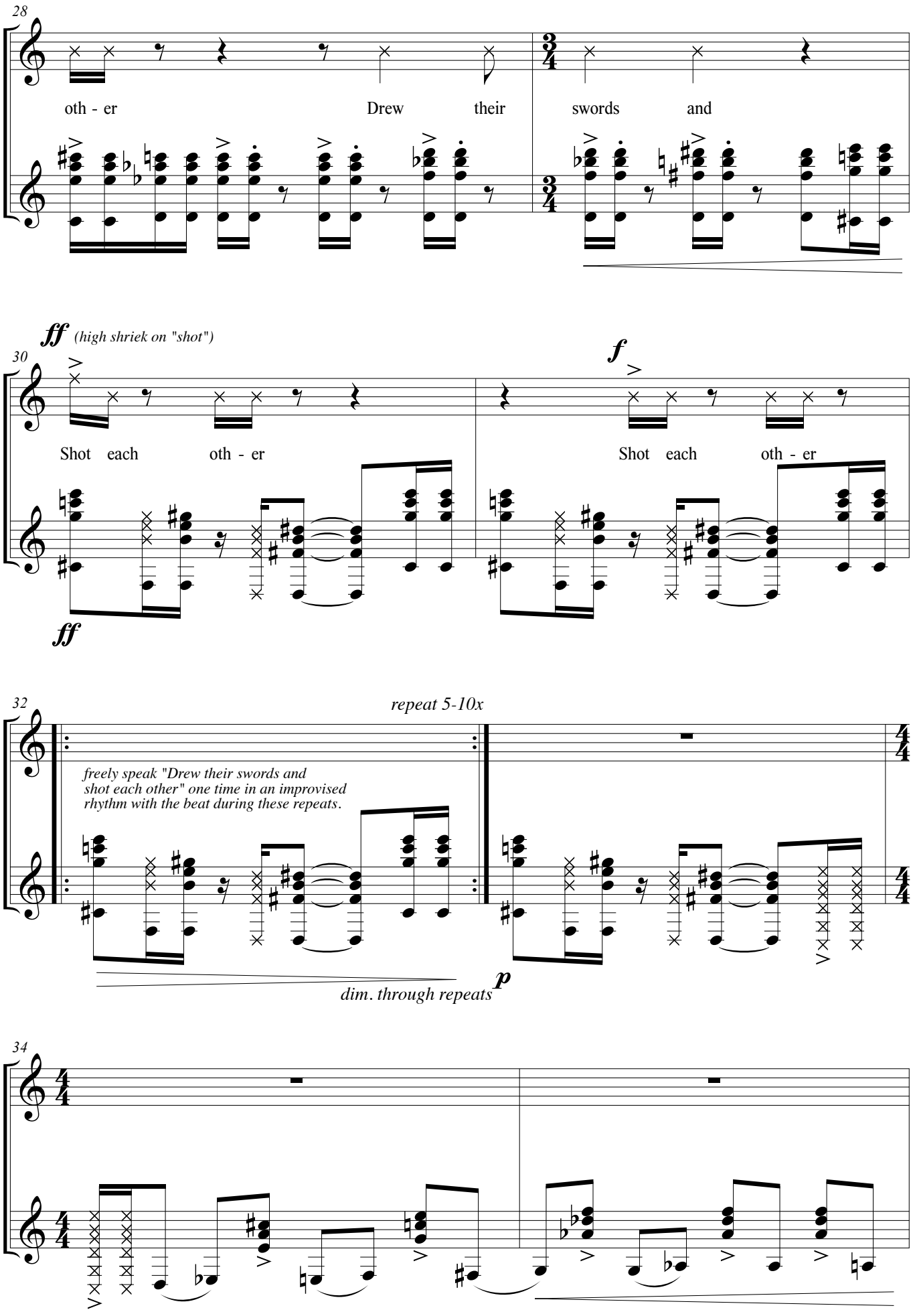

73
asked a crumb of me.
mf
77
rit.
a tempo
bird whistle
p
80
83

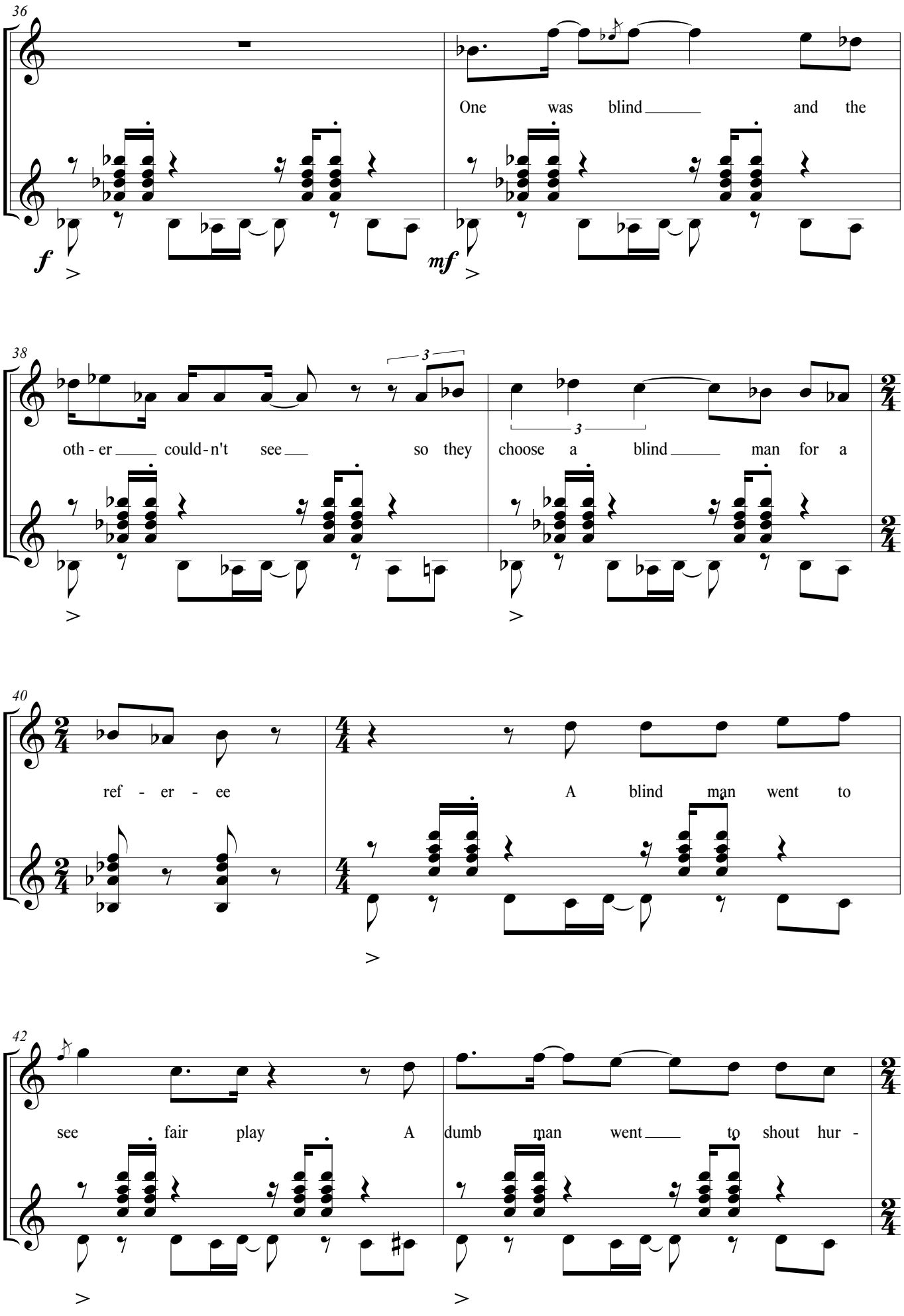
2. **One Bright Day in the Middle of the Night -** unknown ♩ = 112

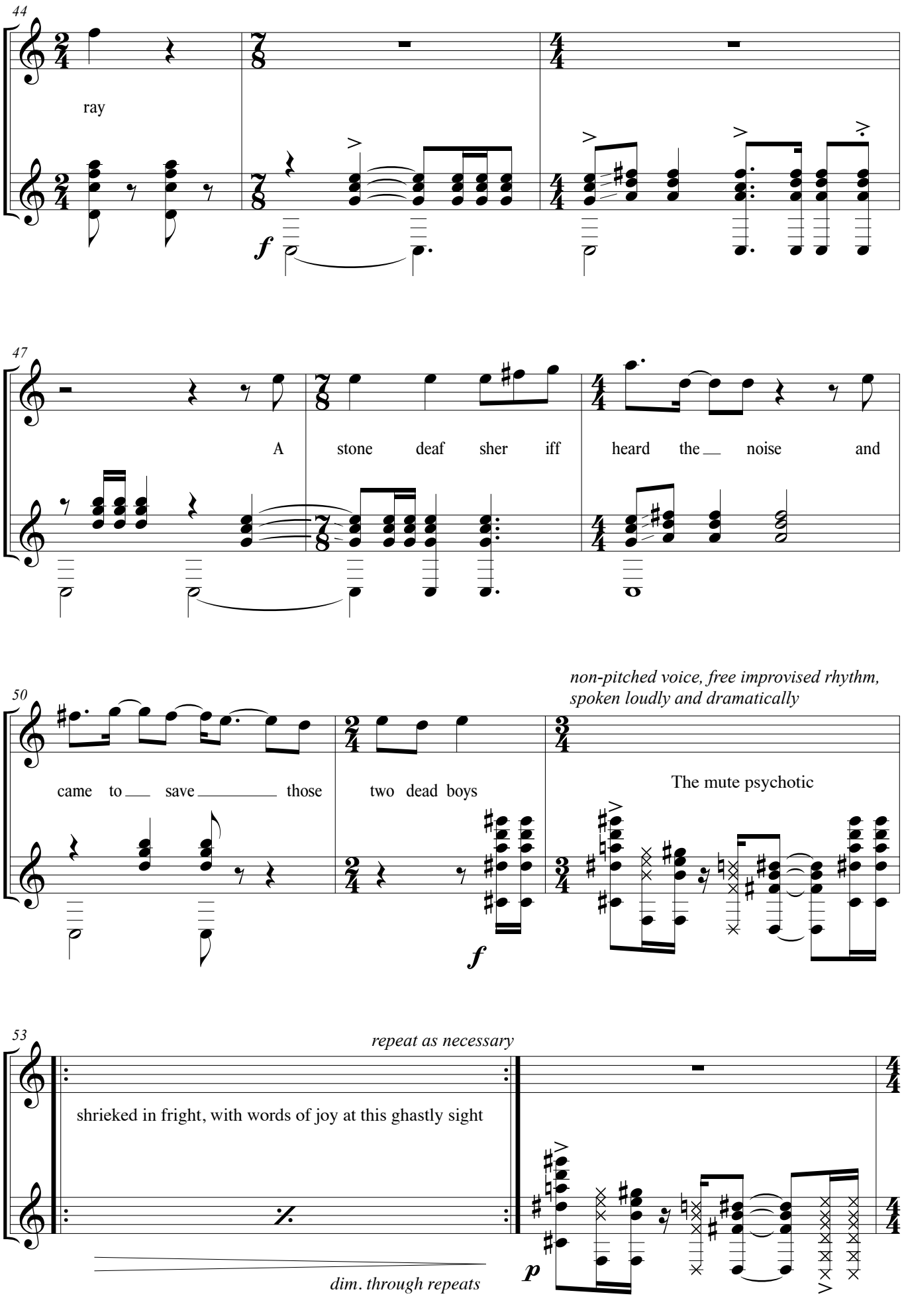


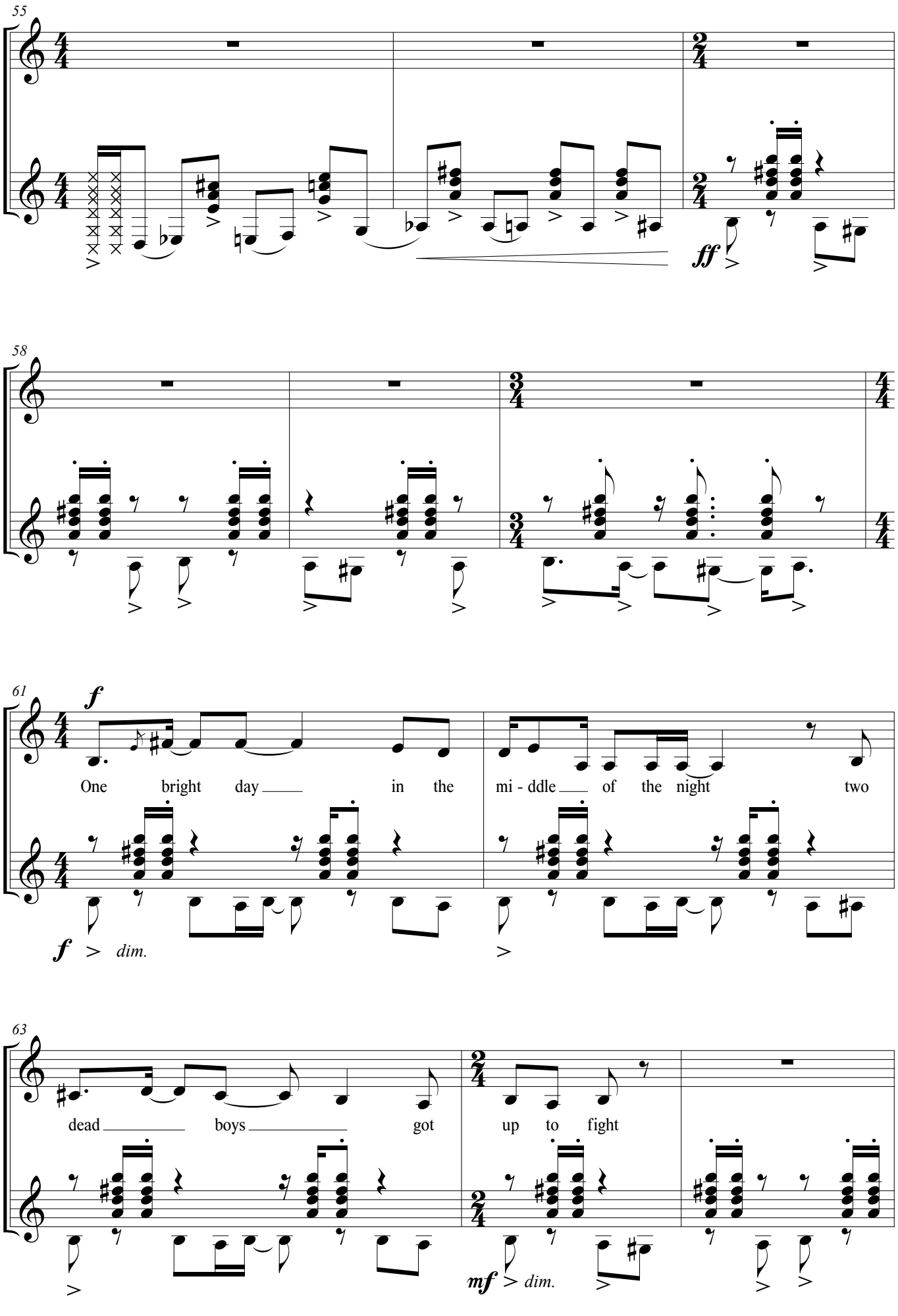

10
fff
p
13
mf no vibrato, "pop-style" singing
One bright day in the mi - ddle of the night in the
15
mi-ddle of the ni - ght of the night
fff
p
17
Two dead boys got up to fight got

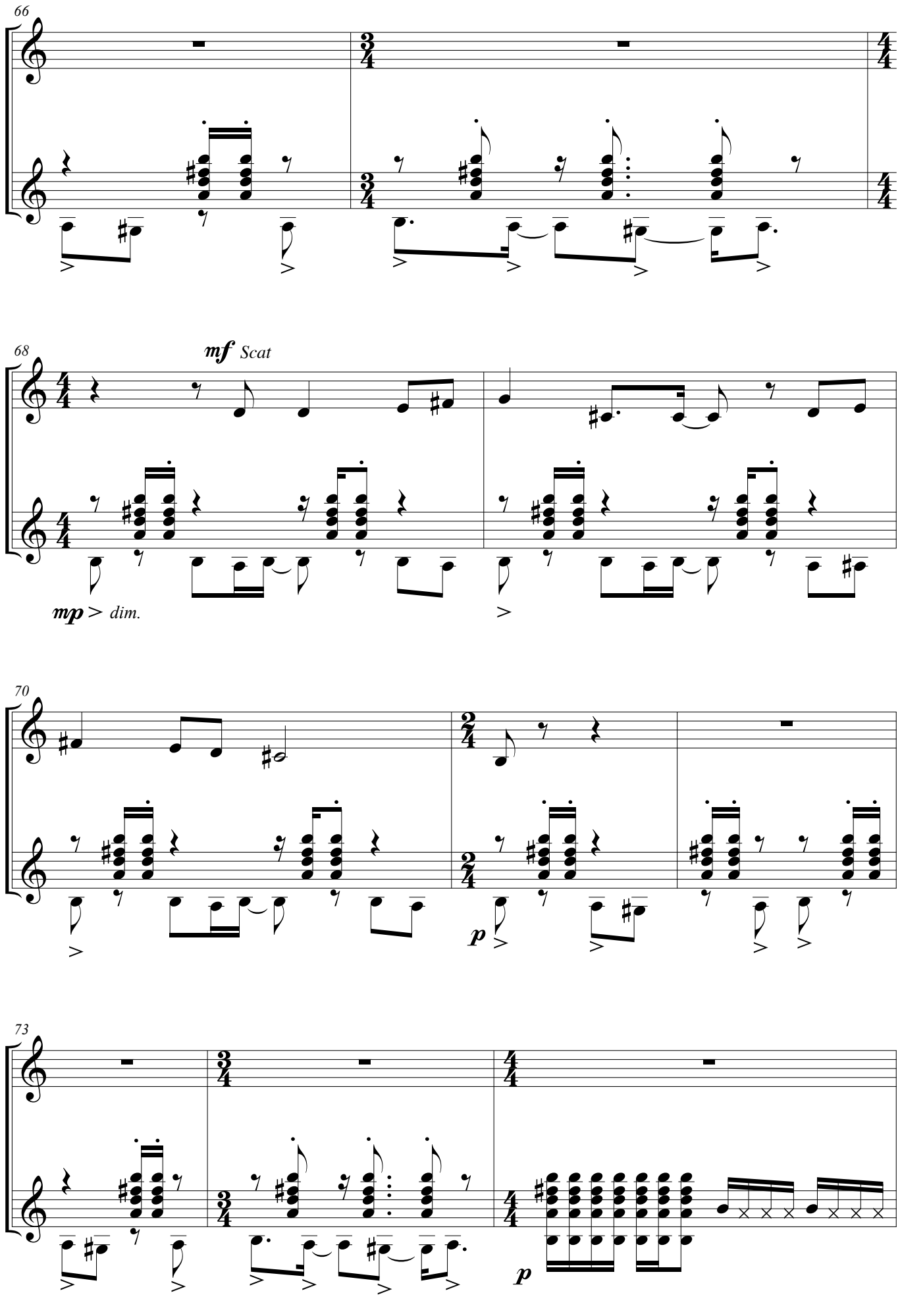

19
up to fi - ght up to fight
ff
21
24
non-pitched voice, "Johnny Cash attitude"
Back to Back to Back to Back to Back they faced each oth - er
f
26
Faced each oth - er Back to Back to Back to Back to Back they faced each

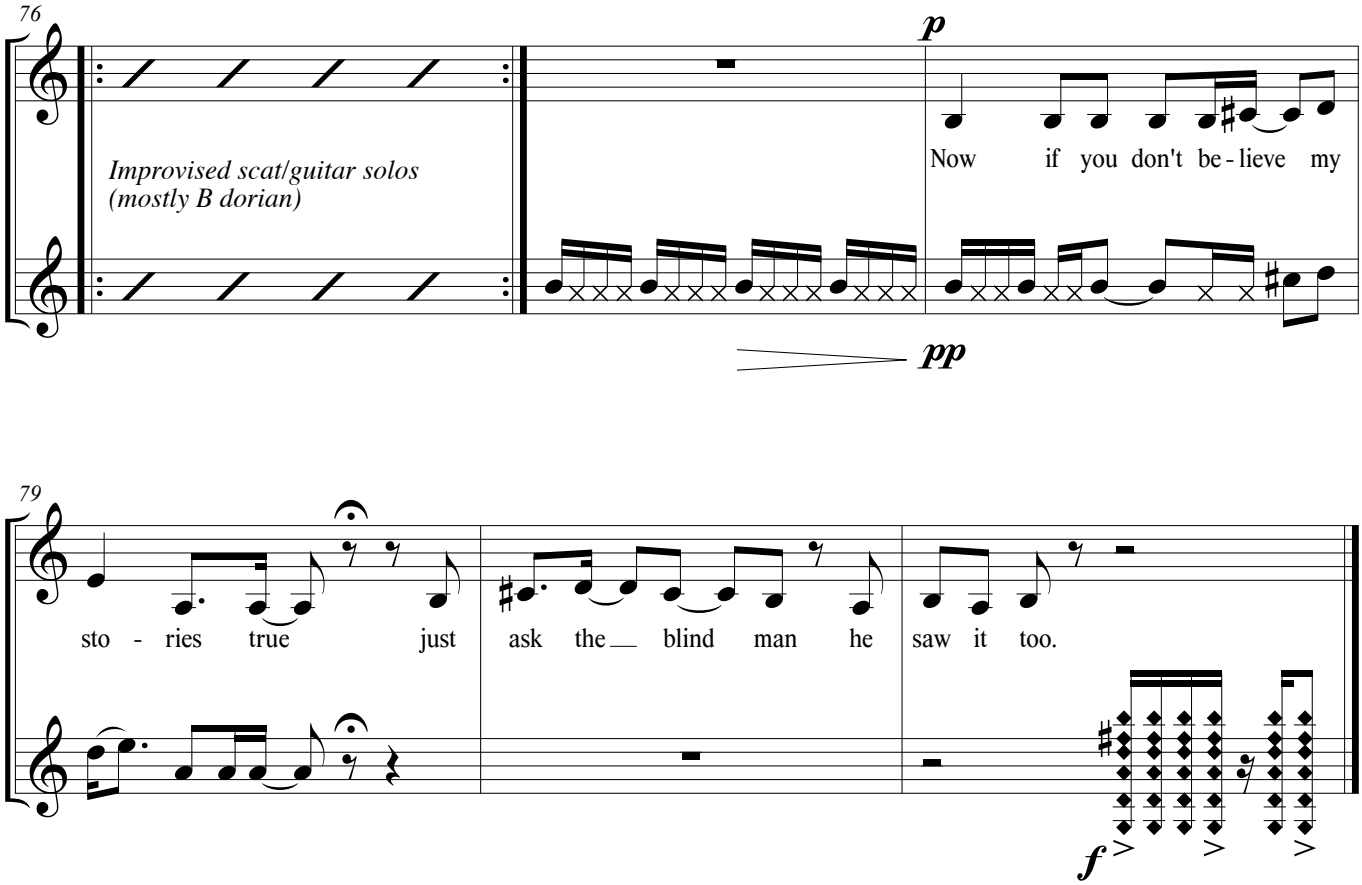

28
oth - er
Drew
their
swords
and
ff (high shriek on "shot")
30
Shot each
oth - er
f
Shot each
oth - er
ff
32
repeat 5-10x
freely speak "Drew their swords and
shot each other" one time in an improvised
rhythm with the beat during these repeats.
p
dim. through repeats
34


36
One was blind and the
f
mf
38
3
oth - er could - n't see so they choose a blind man for a
40
ref - er - ee A blind man went to
42
see fair play A dumb man went to shout hur -


44
ray
f
47
A stone deaf sher iff heard the noise and
50
non-pitched voice, free improvised rhythm,
spoken loudly and dramatically
came to save those two dead boys
The mute psychotic
f
53
repeat as necessary
shrieked in fright, with words of joy at this ghastly sight
dim. through repeats
p

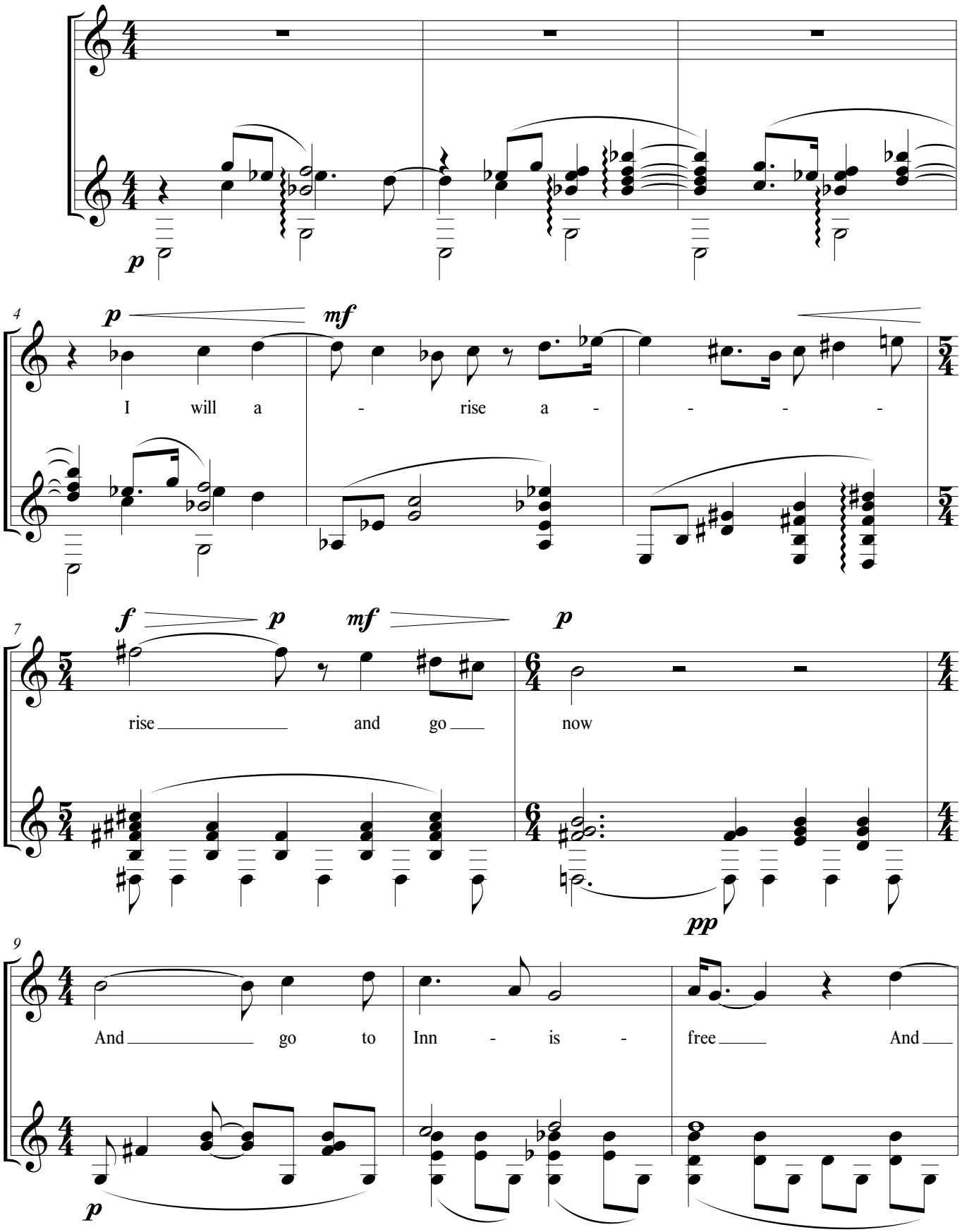

55
ff
58
61
f
One bright day in the mi - ddle of the night two
f dim.
63
dead boys got up to fight
mf dim.

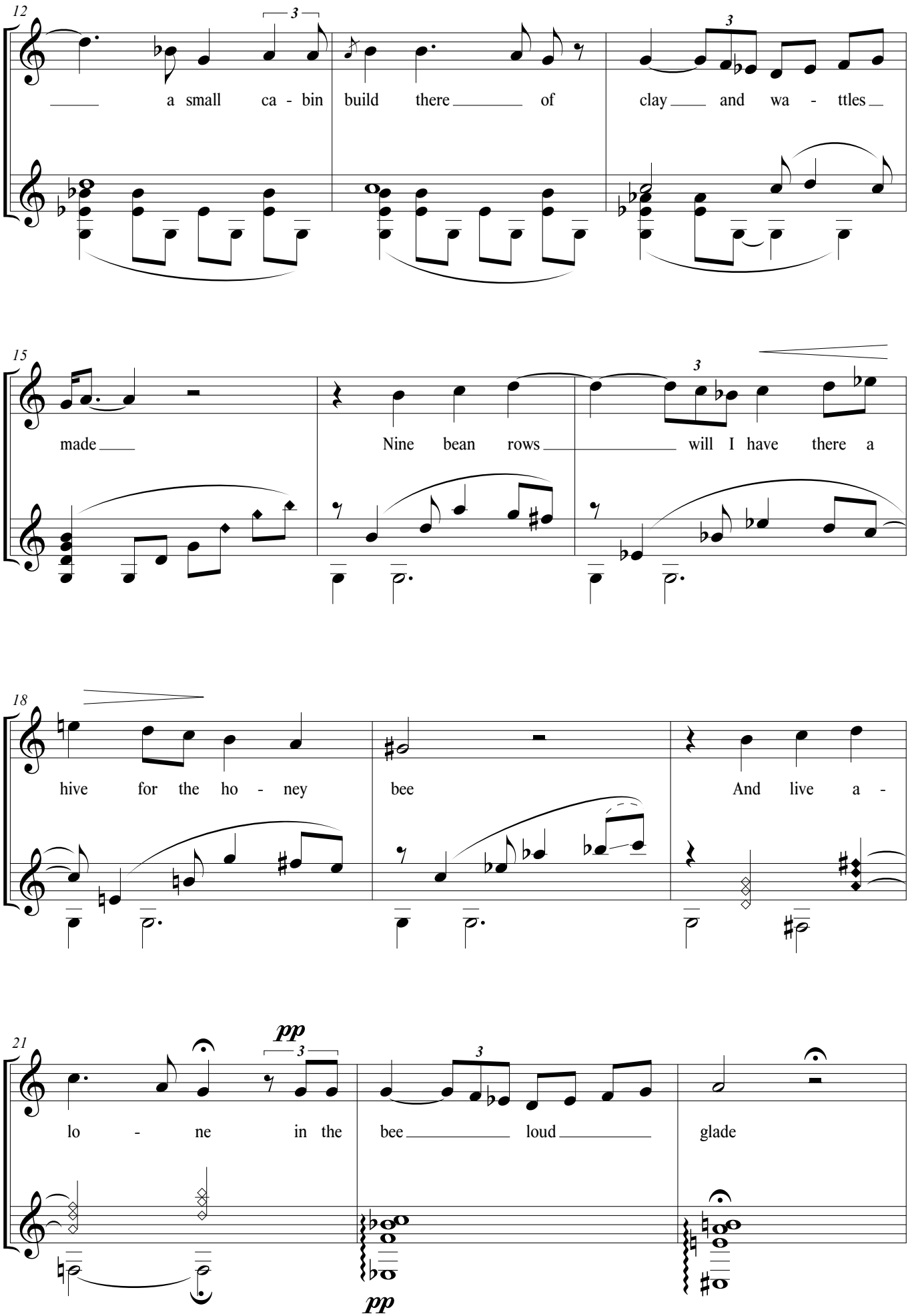

66
68
mf Scat
mp > dim.
70
p
73
p

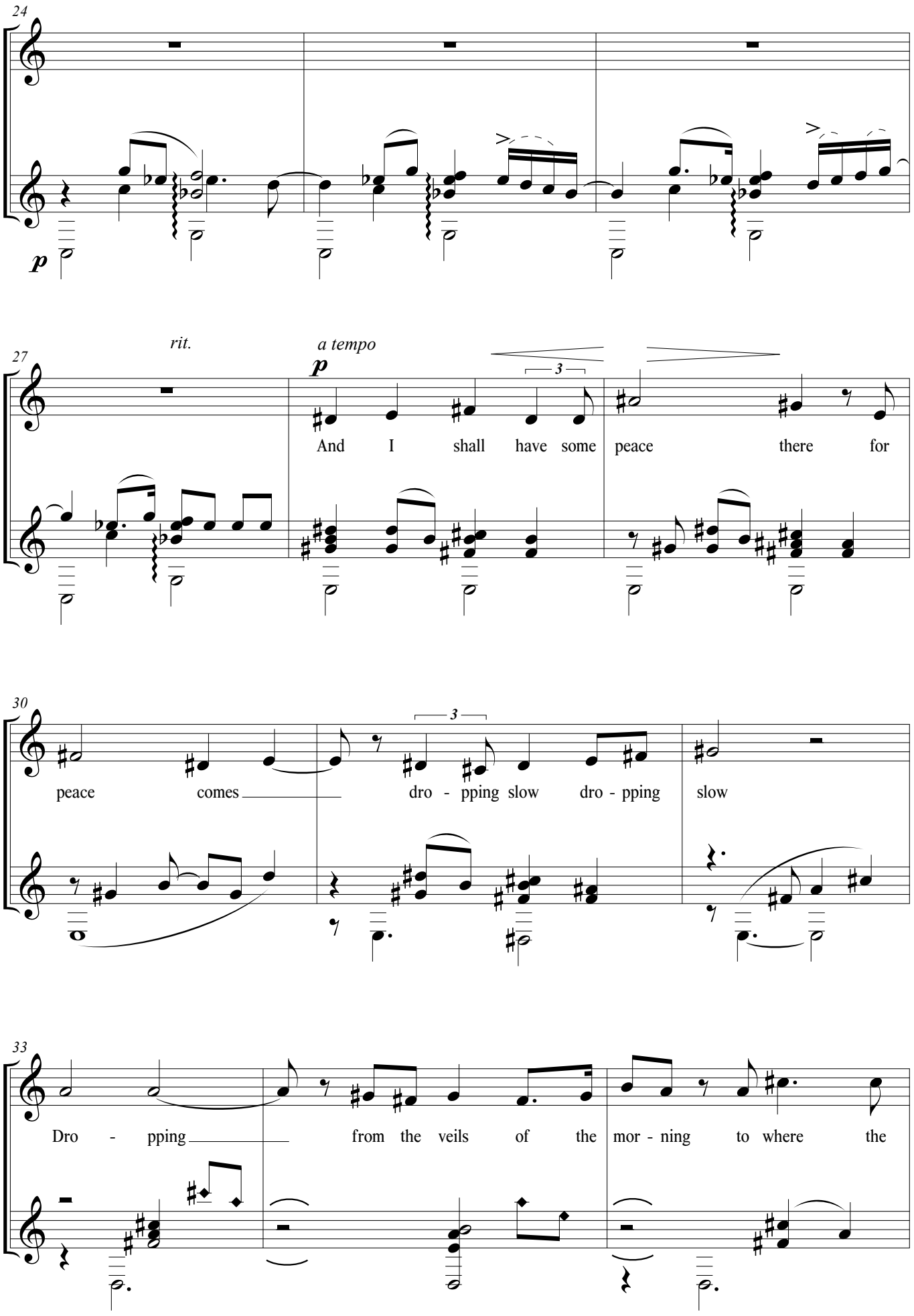

76
Improvised scat/guitar solos
(mostly B dorian)
p
Now if you don't be - lieve my
pp

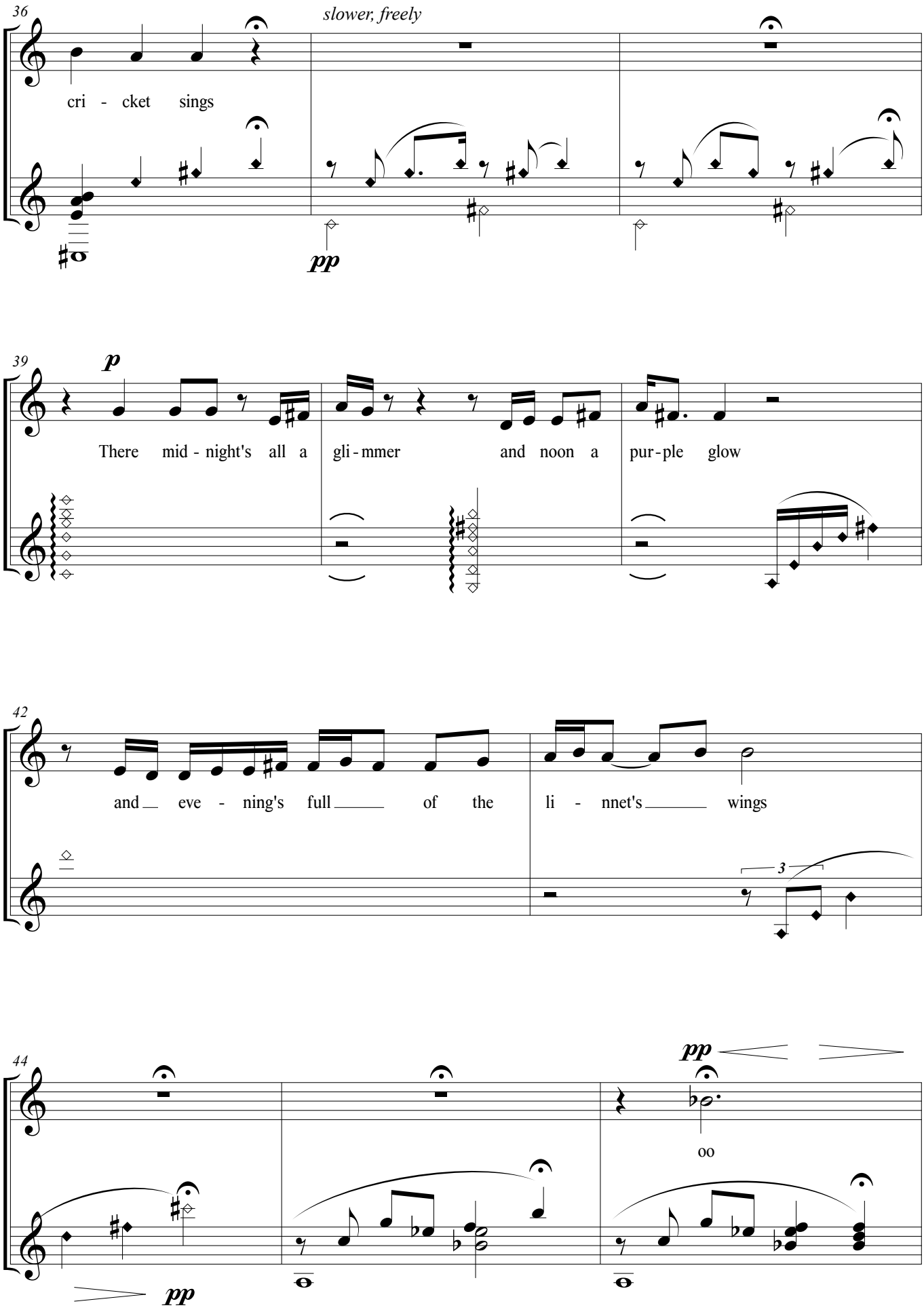
79
sto - ries true just ask the blind man he saw it too.
f

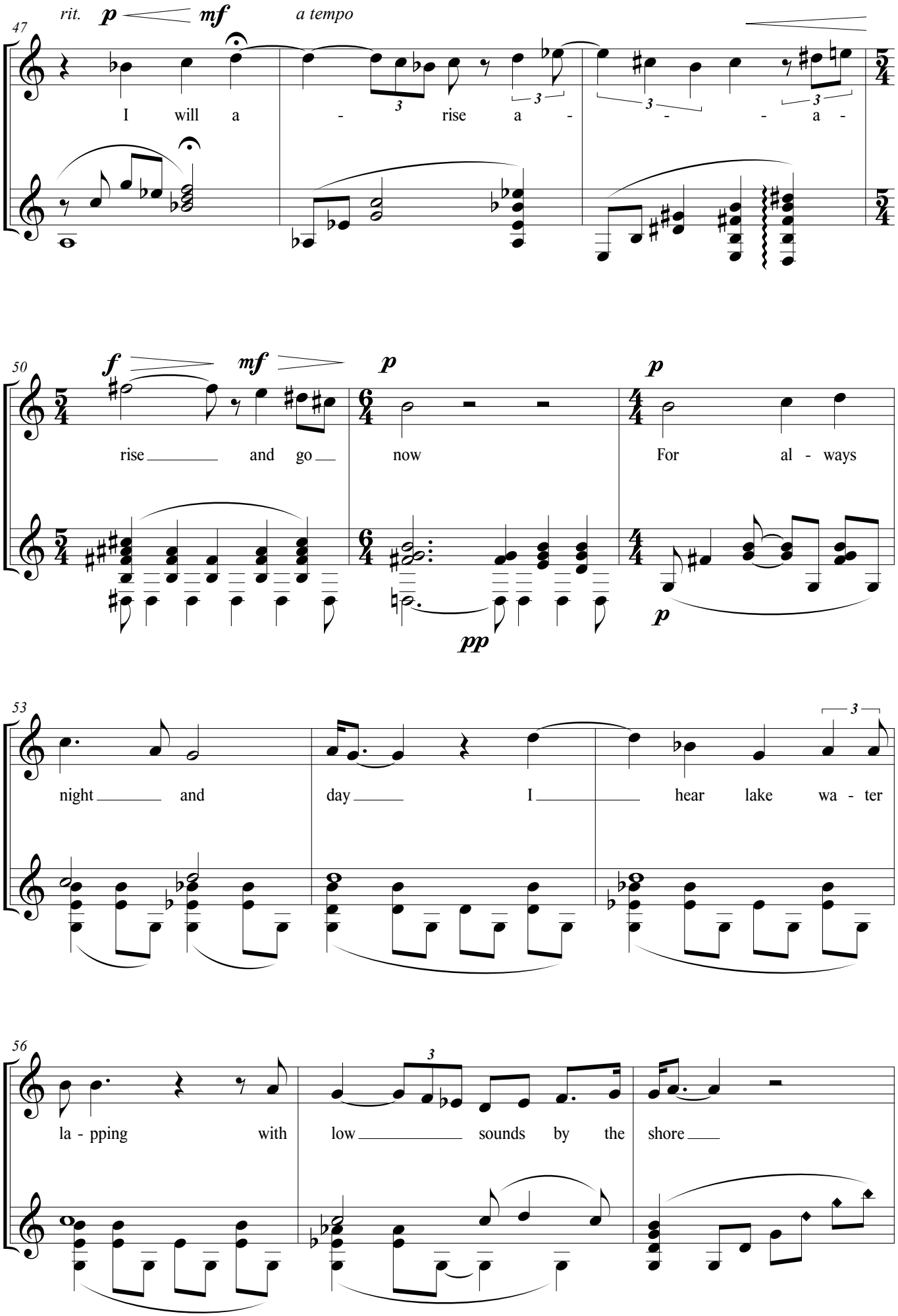
3. The Lake Isle of Innisfree - William Butler Yeats ♩ = 60

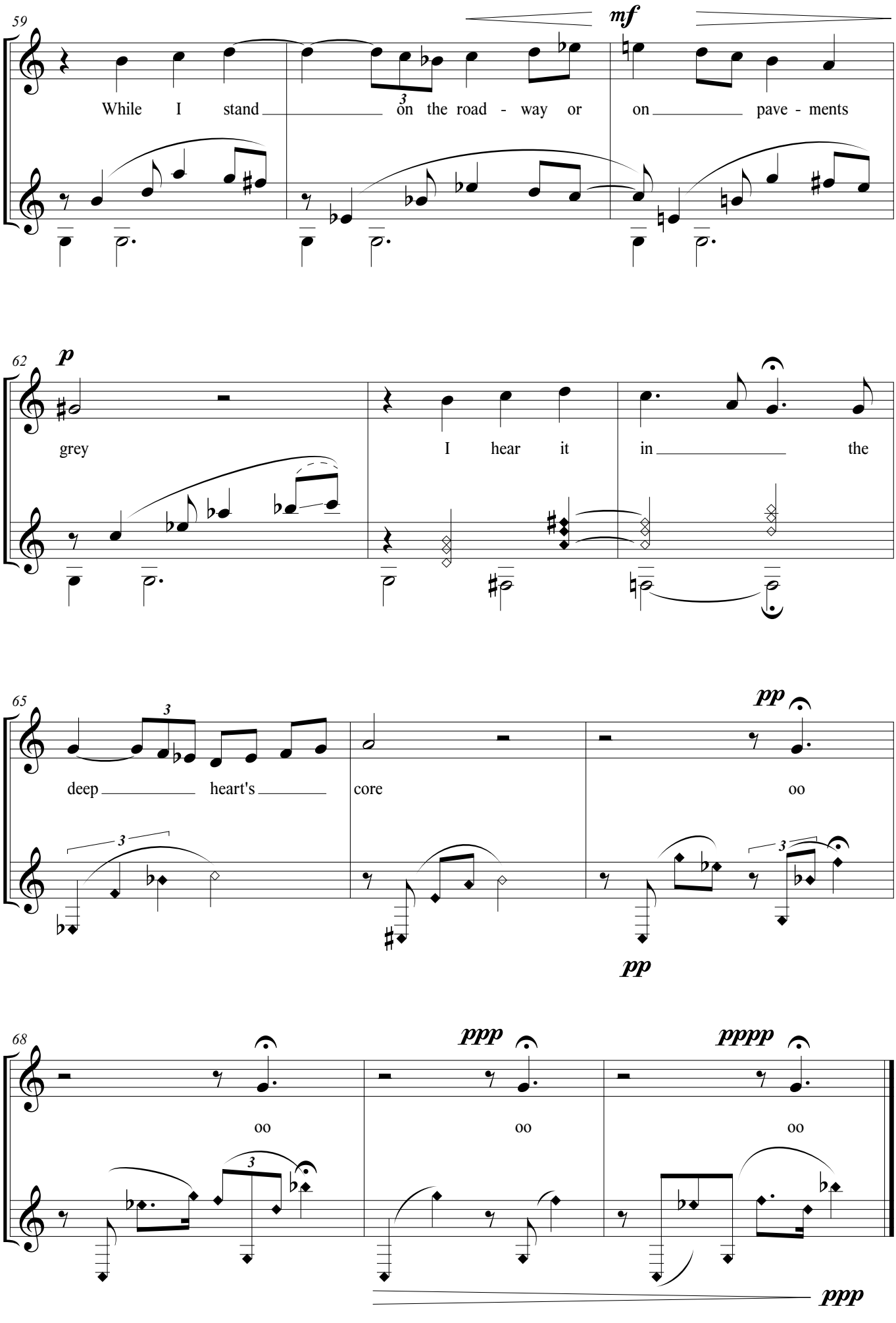



12
a small ca - bin build there of clay and wa - ttles
15
made Nine bean rows will I have there a
18
hive for the ho - ney bee And live a -
21
pp
lo - ne in the bee loud glade
pp


24
p
27
rit.
a tempo
p
3
And I shall have some peace there for
30
3
peace comes dro - pping slow dro - pping slow
33
Dro - pping from the veils of the mor - ning to where the


36
slower, freely
cri - cket sings
pp
39
p
There mid - night's all a gli - mmer and noon a pur - ple glow
42
and eve - ning's full of the li - nnet's wings
3
44
pp
oo
pp


47
rit.
p
mf
a tempo
I will a - rise a - - - a -
50
f
mf
p
p
rise and go now For al - ways
pp
p
53
night and day I hear lake wa - ter
56
la - pping with low sounds by the shore


59
mf
While I stand on the road - way or on pave - ments
62
p
grey I hear it in the
65
pp
deep heart's core oo
pp
68
ppp
pppp
oo oo oo
ppp