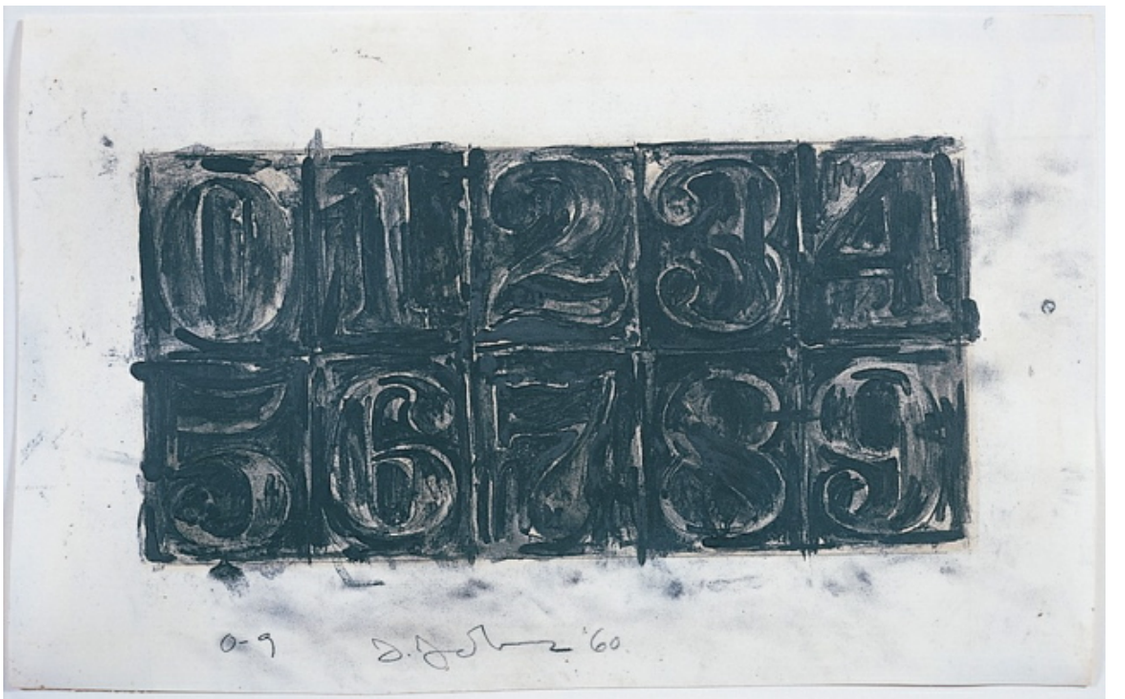
BORROWED LOVE SONGS

MUSIC BY ERIC SHANFIELD



POEM BY JOHN YAU

BORROWED LOVE SONGS

Eric Shanfield | ENS.2006.3a

poem by John Yau

Voice

Piano

Borrowed Love Songs may be performed by any voice type, male or female. All songs can be transposed up or down within reason, taking into account musical considerations such as timbre and tessitura. Preferably, consecutive songs should not be in the same key.

Pedal markings are sparse and should be considered guidelines; otherwise pedalling is left to the performer, though a transparent texture is generally desired.

This cycle should always be performed in its entirety. It is not intended that individual songs or selections be performed alone. *Borrowed Love Songs* lasts about 17 minutes.

Program notes:

I discovered poet John Yau's *Borrowed Love Poems* on a ladder at the Strand one day in 2001, where it lay as if waiting for me. Though I immediately knew I had to set his work, it was several years before inspiration struck. Then one day I was in the shower and I heard the fifth song singing in my head, ready to go, and I jumped out, dripping wet, ready to begin. *Borrowed Love Songs* comprises ten songs for voice and piano and lasts about 17 minutes.

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BORROWED LOVE SONGS

John Yau

1
What can I do, I have dreamed of you so much
What can I do, lost as I am in the sky

What can I do, now that all
the doors and windows are open

I will whisper this in your ear
as if it were a rough draft

something I scribbled on a napkin
I have dreamed of you so much

there is no time left to write
no time left on the sundial

for my shadow to fall back to the earth
lost as I am in the sky

2
What can I do, all the years that we talked
and I was afraid to want more

What can I do, now that these hours
belong to neither you nor me

Lost as I am in the sky
What can I do, now that I cannot find

the words I need
when your hair is mine

now that there is no time to sleep
now that your name is not enough

3
What can I do, if a red meteor wakes the earth
and the color of robbery is in the air

Now that I dream of you so much
my lips are like clouds

drifting above the shadow of one who is asleep
Now that the moon is enthralled with a wall

What can I do, if one of us is lying on the earth
and the other is lost in the sky

4
What can I do, lost as I am in the wind
and lightning that surrounds you

What can I do, now that my tears
are rising toward the sky

only to fall back
into the sea again

What can I do, now that this page is wet
now that this pen is empty

5
What can I do, now that the sky
has shut its iron door

and bolted clouds
to the back of the moon

now that the wind
has diverted the ocean's attention

now that a red meteor
has plunged into the lake

now that I am awake
now that you have closed the book

6
Now that the sky is green
and the air is red with rain

I never stood in
the shadow of pyramids

I never walked from village to village
in search of fragments

that had fallen to earth in another age
What can I do, now that we have collided

on a cloudless night
and sparks rise

from the bottom of a thousand lakes

7
To some, the winter sky is a blue peach
teeming with worms

and the clouds are growing thick
with sour milk

What can I do, now that the fat black sea
is seething

now that I have refused to return
my borrowed dust to the butterflies

their wings full of yellow flour

8
What can I do, I never believed happiness
could be premeditated

What can I do, having argued with the obedient world
that language will infiltrate its walls

What can I do, now that I have sent you
a necklace of dead dried bees

and now that I want to
be like the necklace

and turn flowers into red candles
pouring from the sun

9
What can I do, now that I have spent my life
studying the physics of good-bye

every velocity and particle in all the waves
undulating through the relapse of a moment's fission

now that I must surrender this violin
to the sea's foaming black tongue

now that January is almost here
and I have started celebrating a completely different life

10
Now that the seven wonders of the night
have been stolen by history

Now that the sky is lost and the stars
have slipped into a book

Now that the moon is boiling
like the blood where it swims

Now that there are no blossoms left
to glue to the sky

What can I do,
I who never invented anything

and who dreamed of you so much
I was amazed to discover

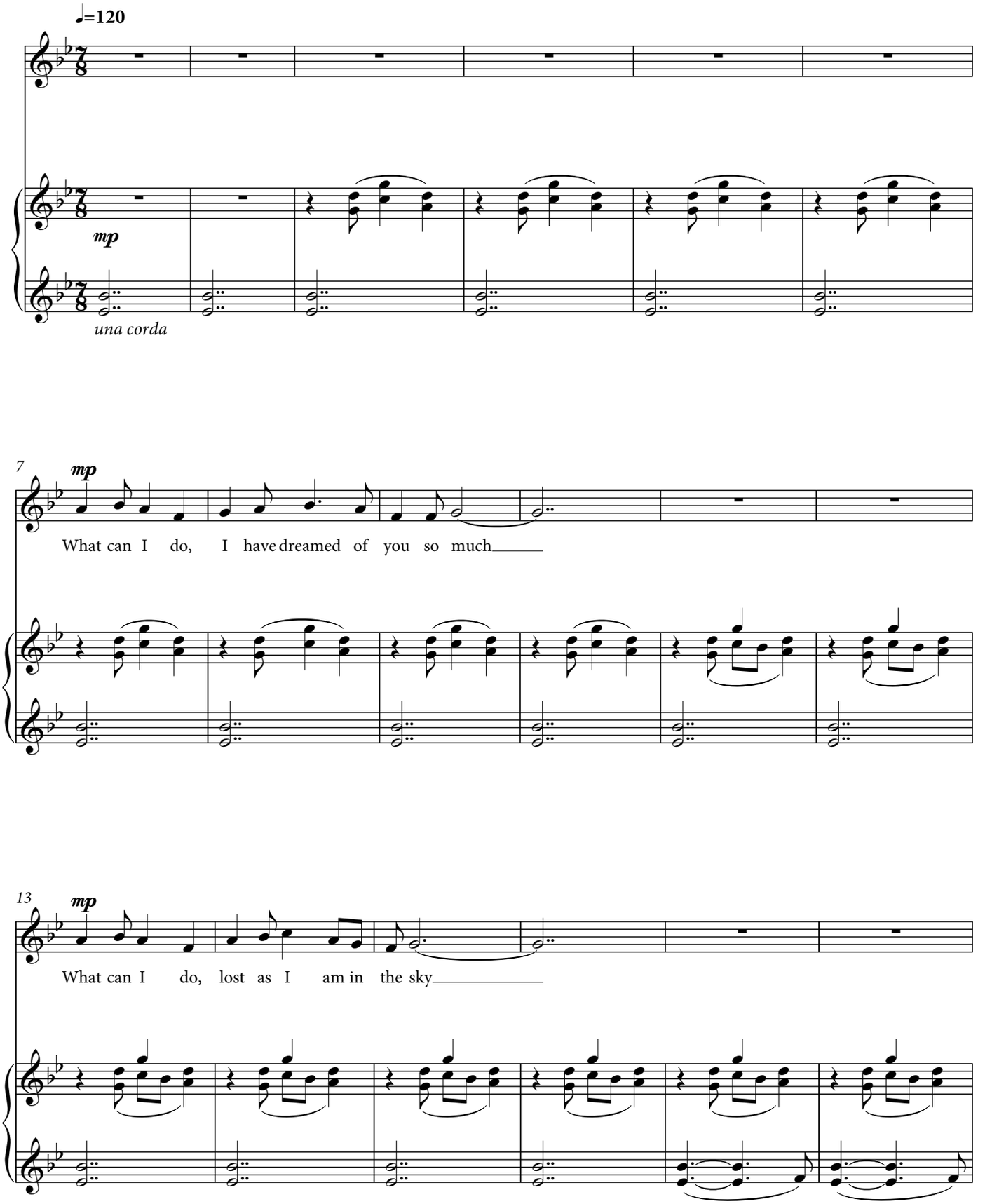
the claw marks of those
who preceded us across this burning floor

BORROWED LOVE SONGS

1

John Yau

Eric Shanfield



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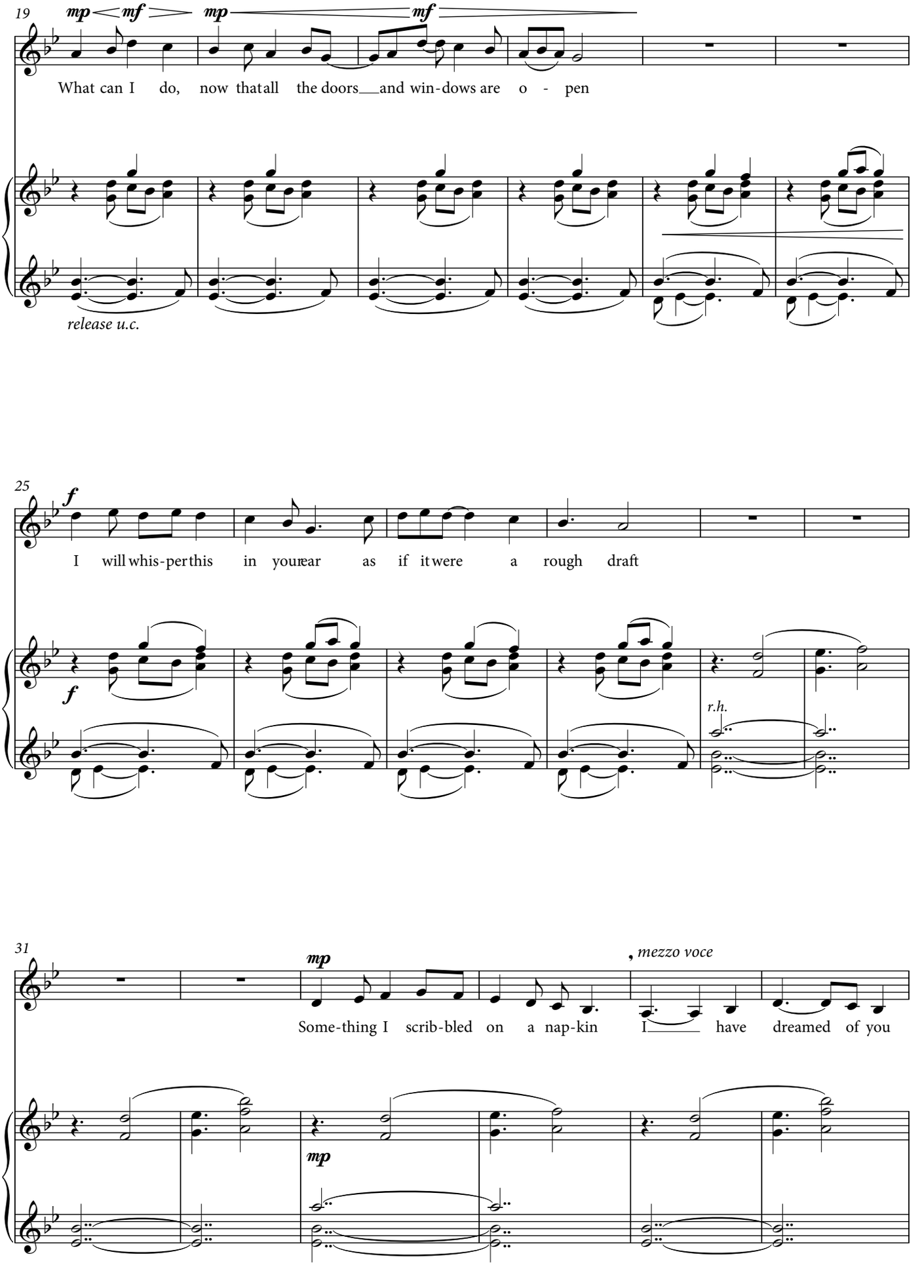
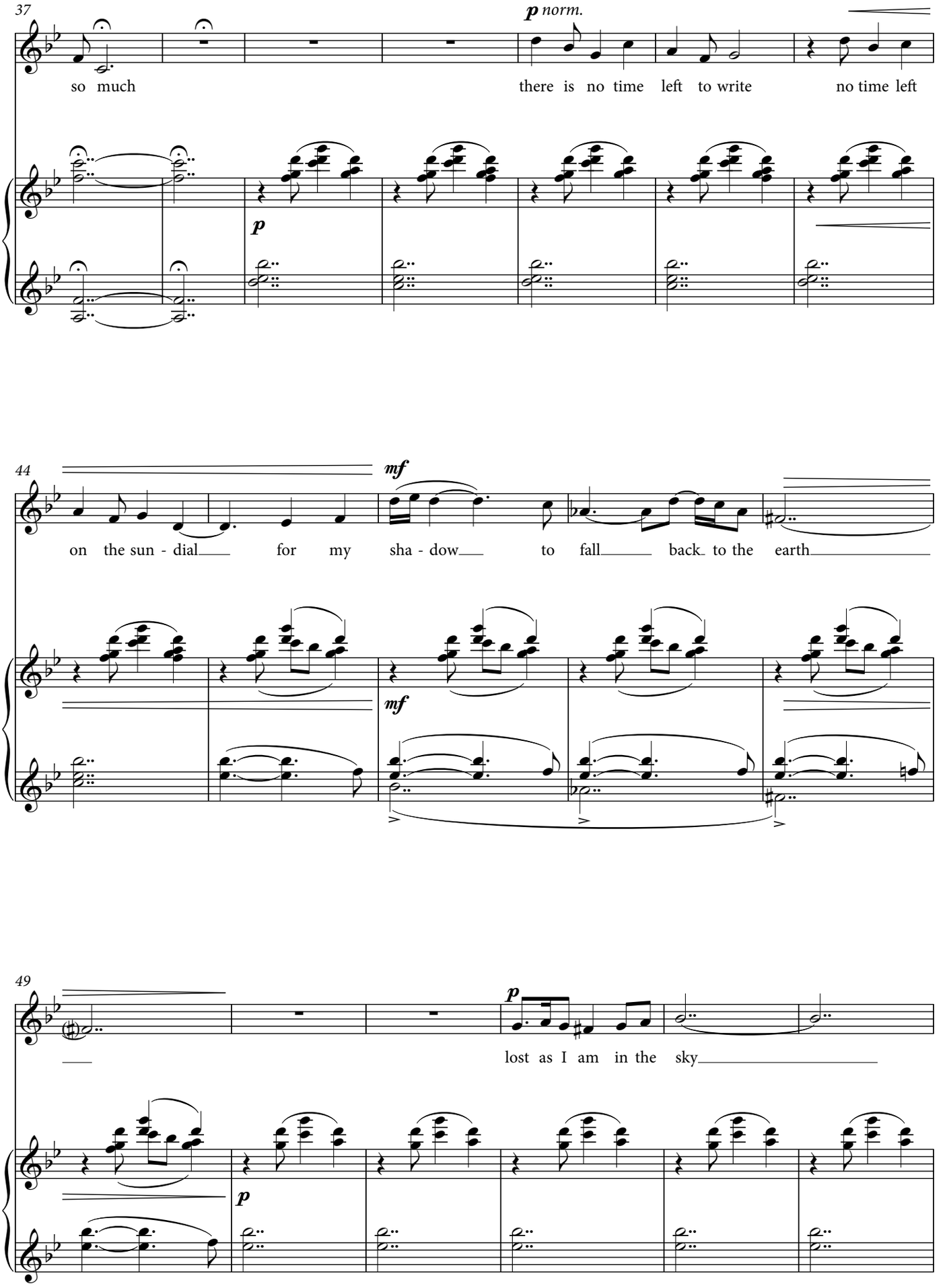
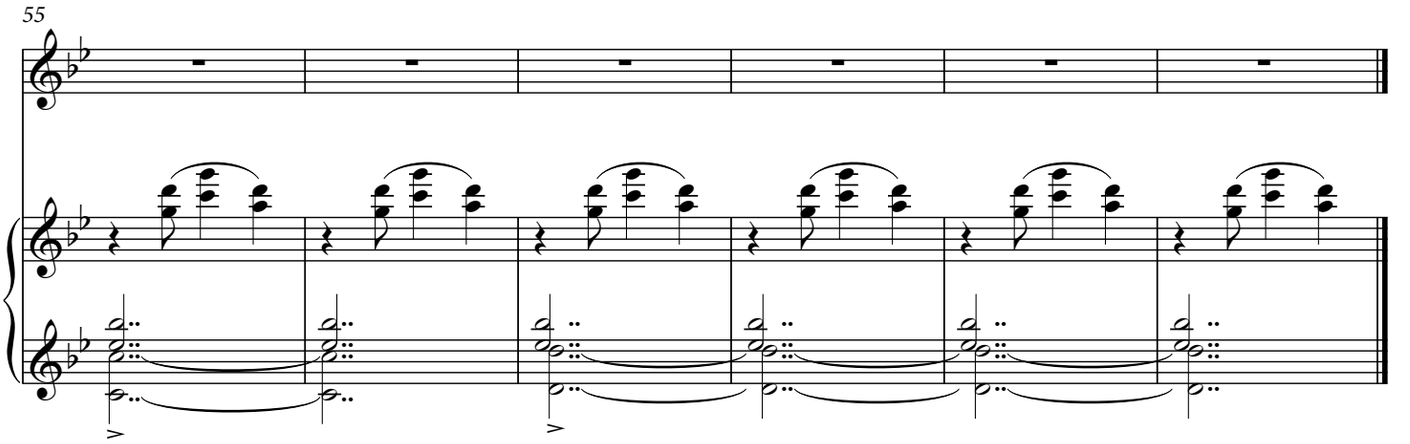

19
mp
mf
mp
mf
What can I do, now that all the doors and win-dows are o - pen
release u.c.
25
f
I will whis-per this in your ear as if it were a rough draft
f
r.h.
31
mp
, mezzo voce
Some-thing I scrib-bled on a nap-kin I have dreamed of you
mp


37
p norm.
so much
there is no time left to write
no time left
p
44
mf
on the sun - dial
for my sha - dow
to fall
back to the earth
mf
49
p
lost as I am in the sky
p


55

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2

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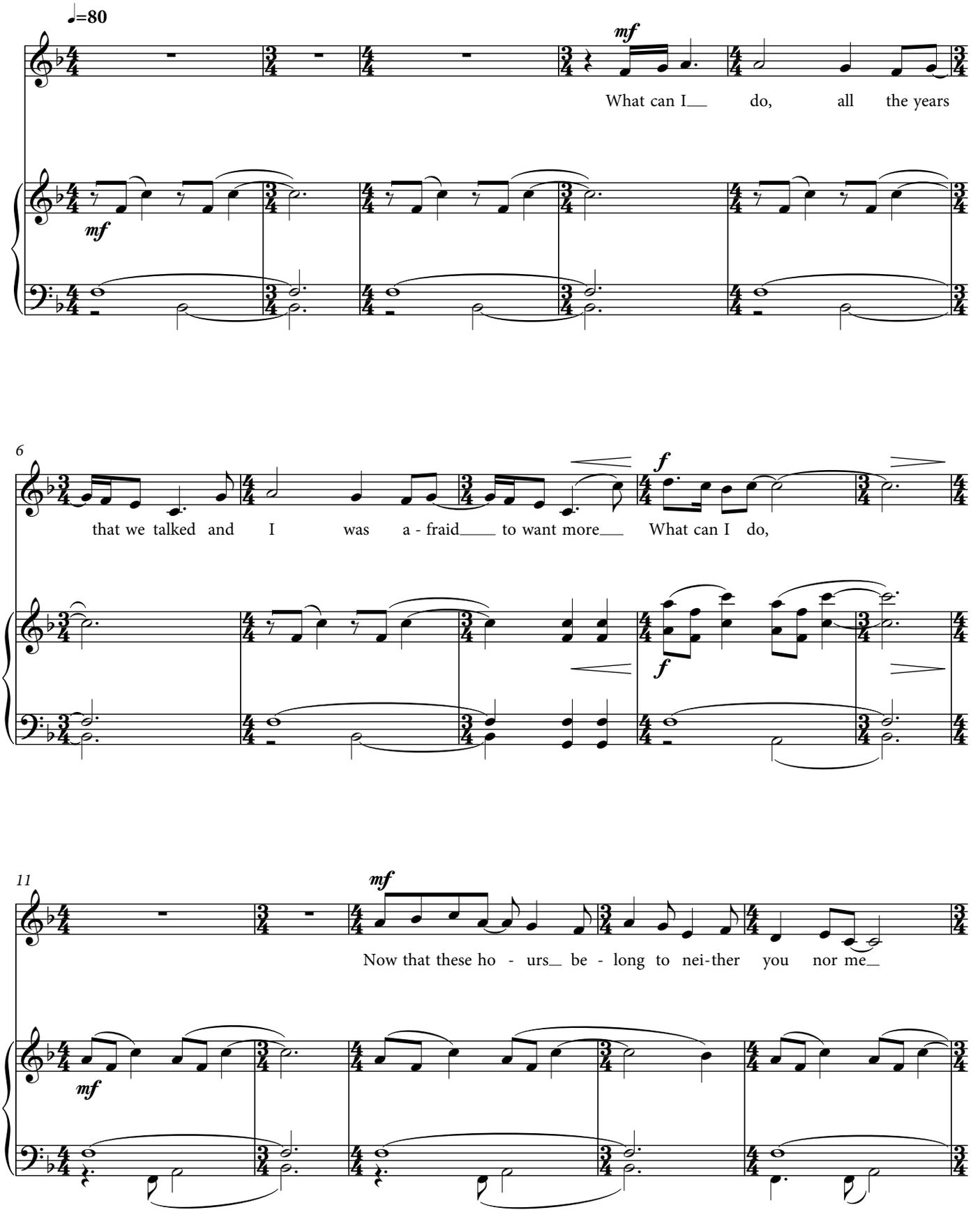

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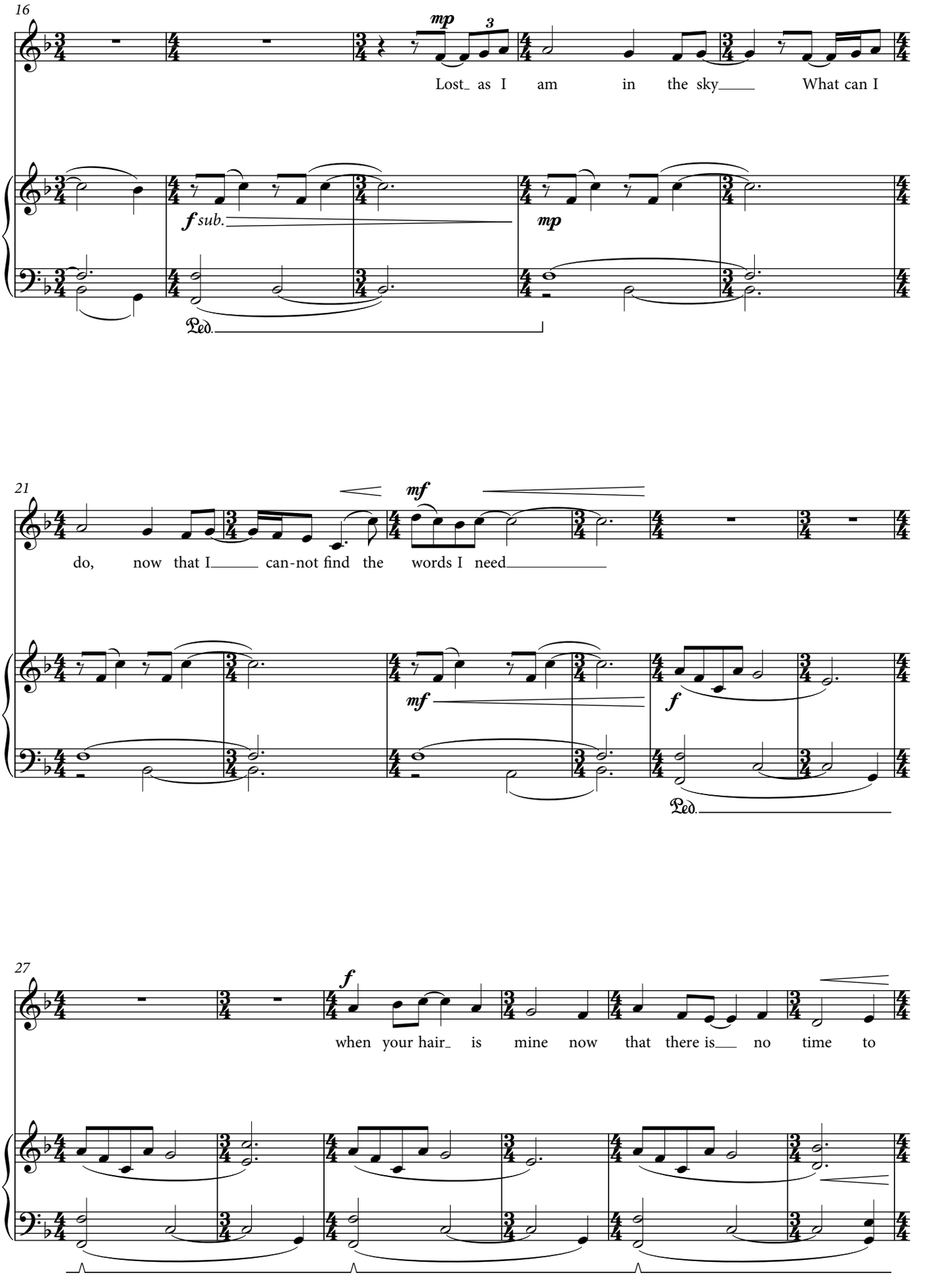
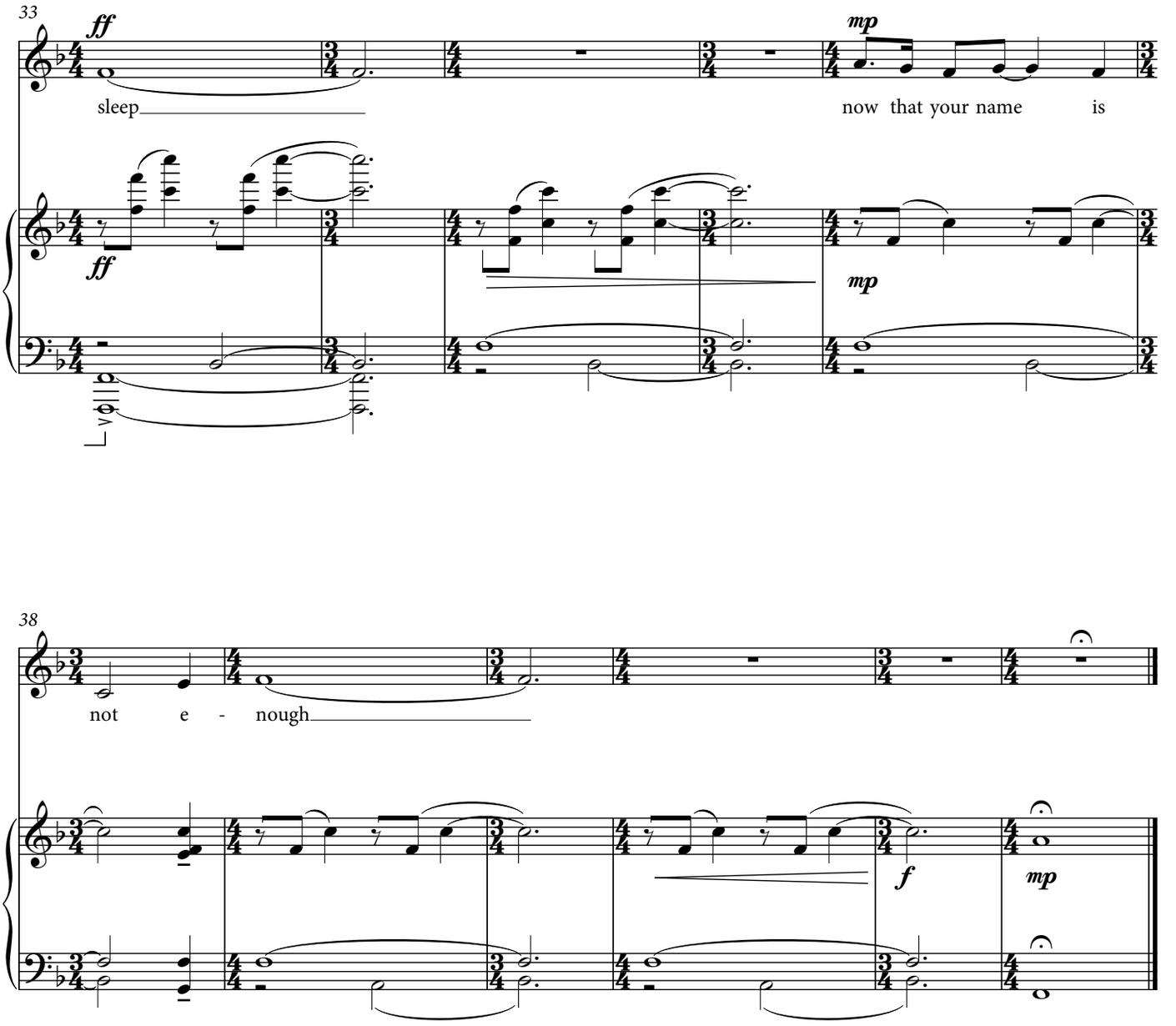

16
mp
3
Lost_ as I am in the sky What can I
f sub.
mp
Ped.
21
mf
do, now that I can-not find the words I need
mf
f
Ped.
27
f
when your hair_ is mine now that there is no time to


33
ff
sleep
mp
now that your name is
ff
mp
38
not e - nough
f
mp

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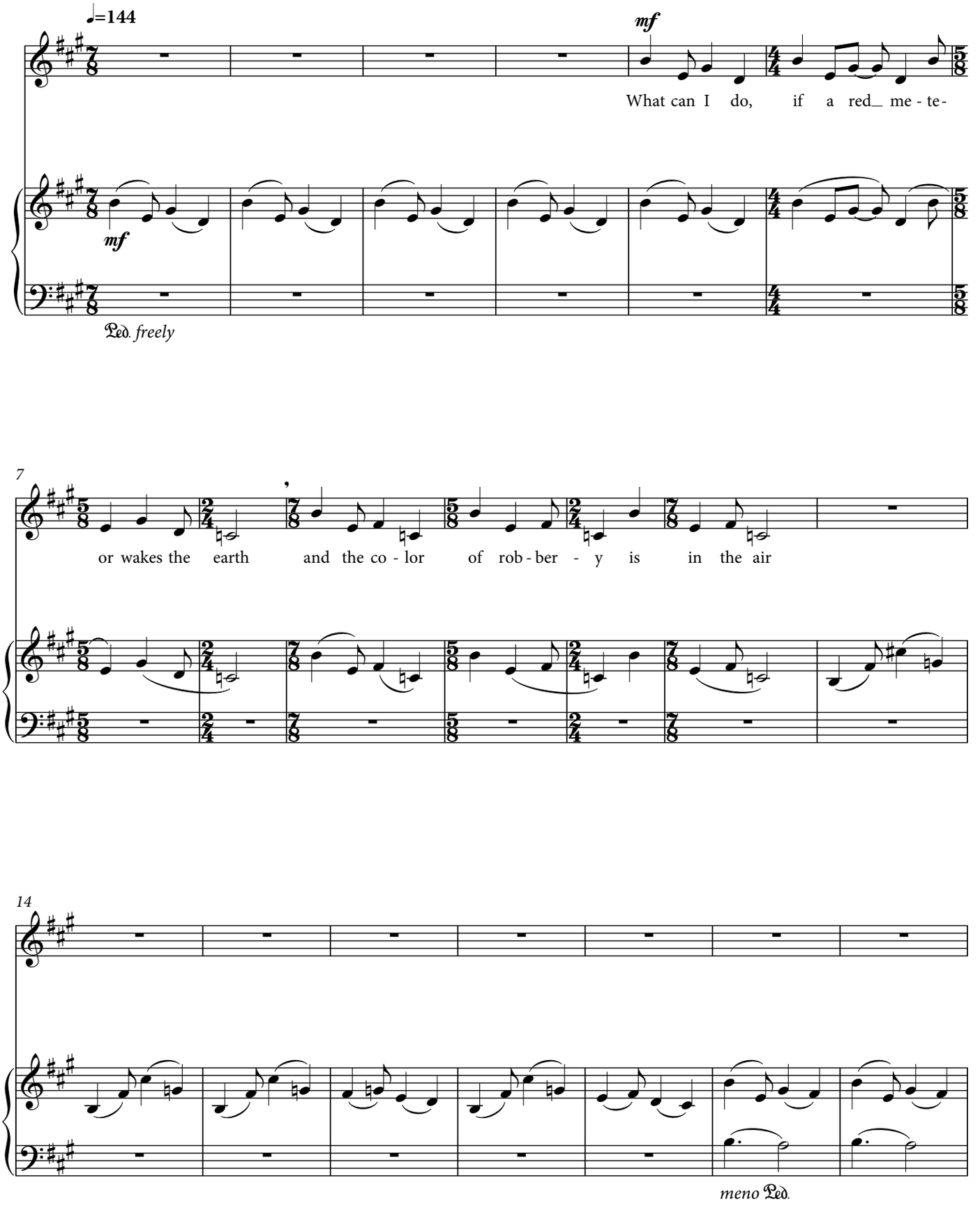

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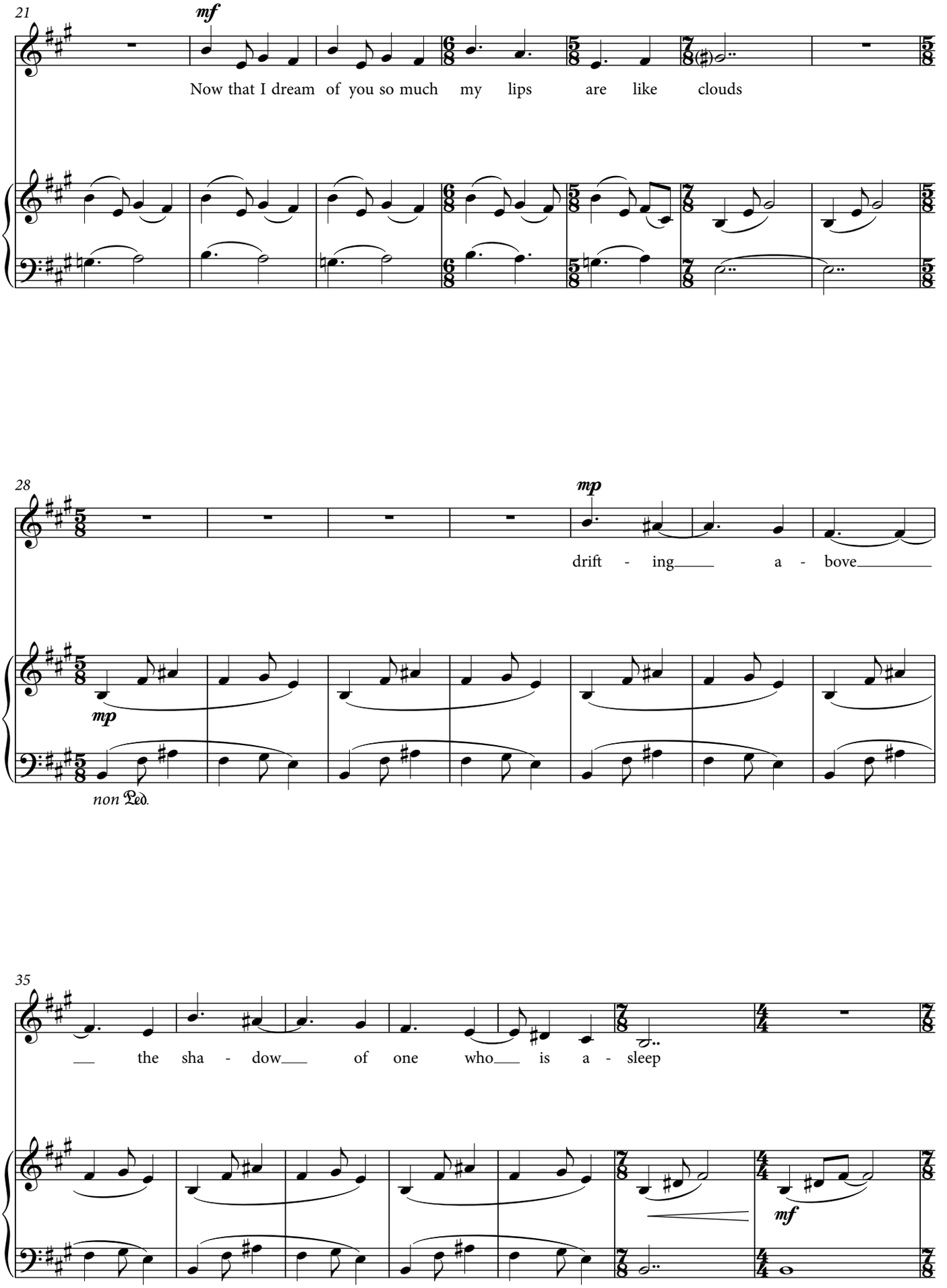
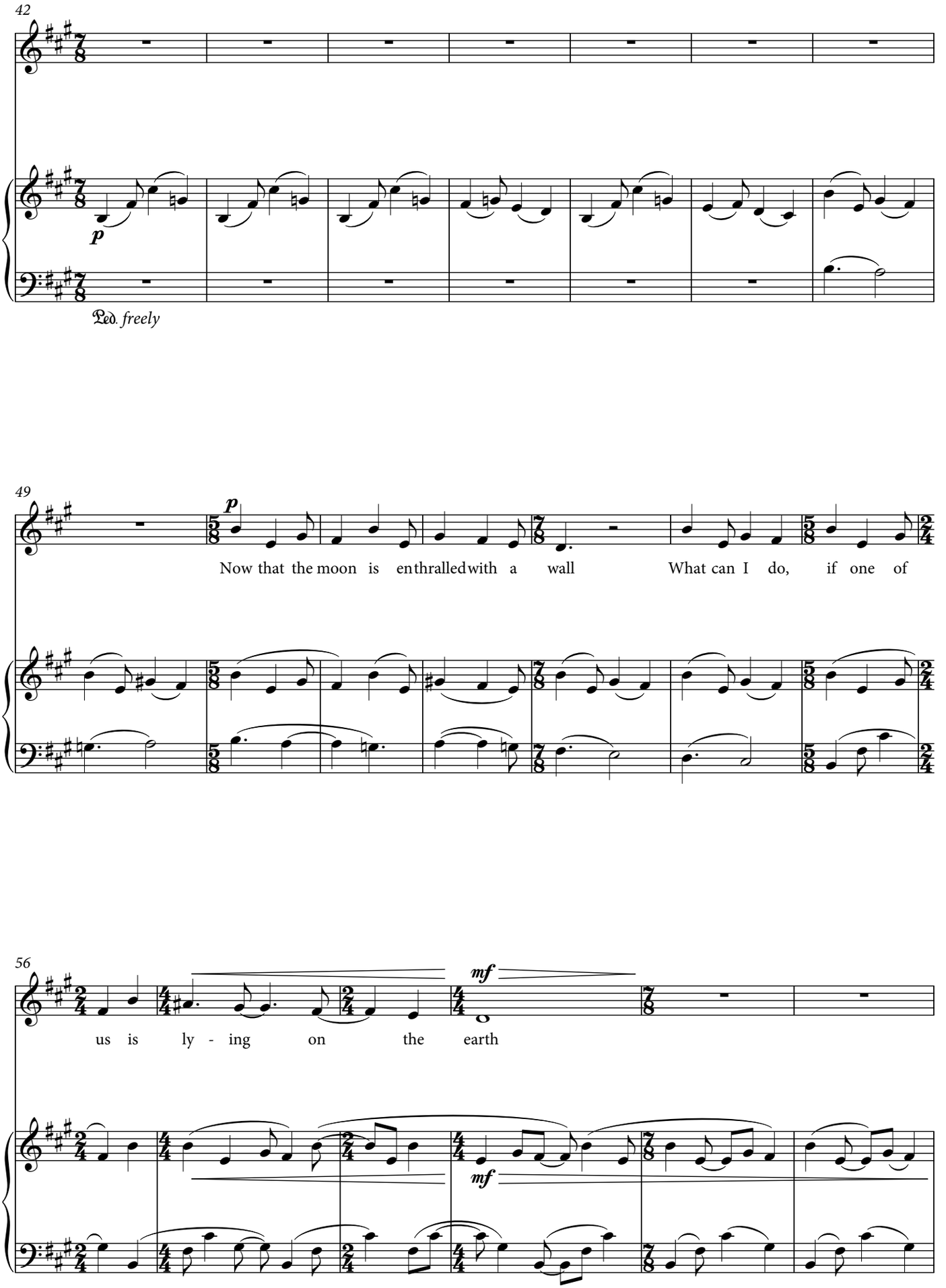
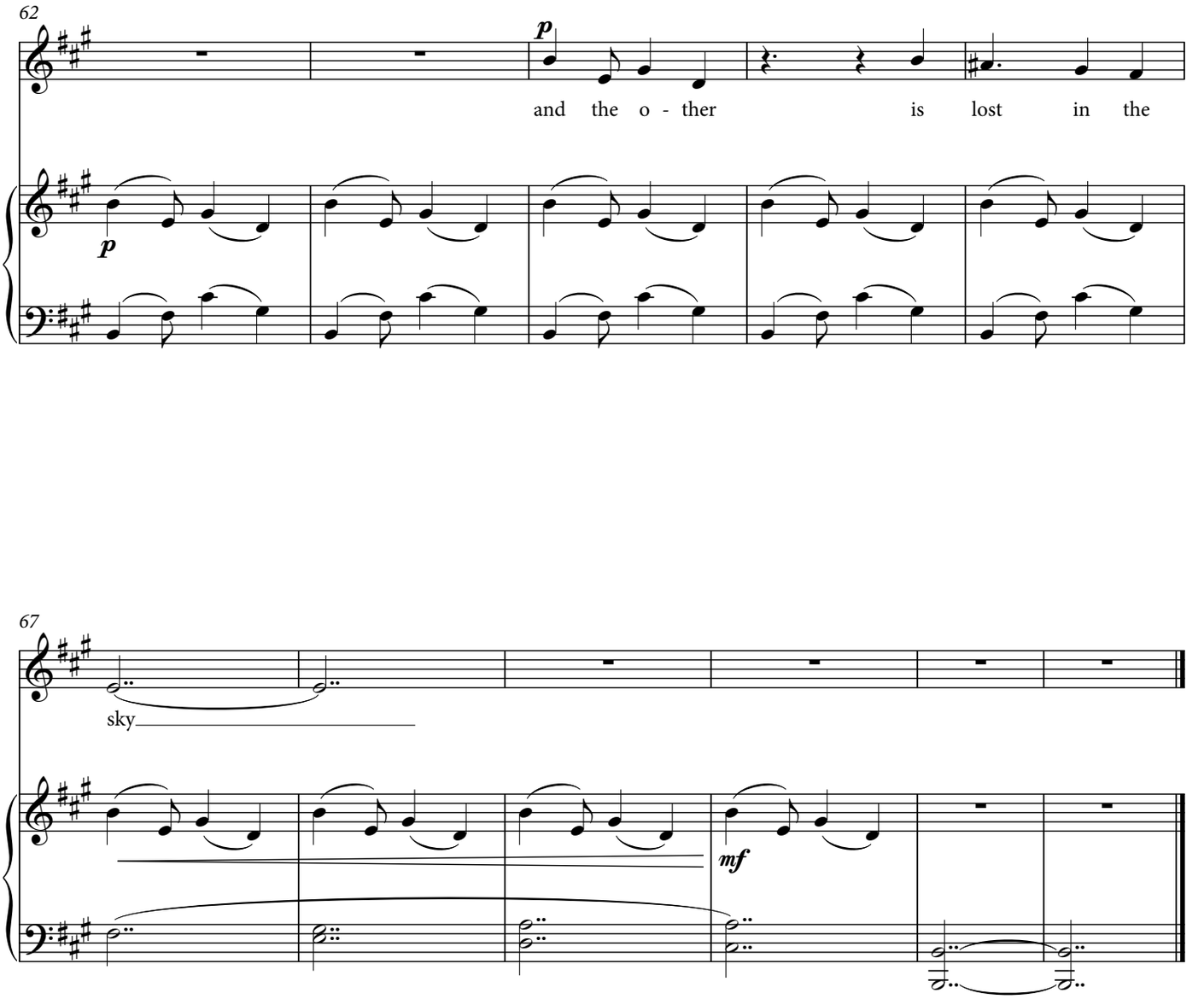

21
mf
Now that I dream of you so much my lips are like clouds
28
mp
drift - ing a - bove
mp
non Ped.
35
the sha - dow of one who is a - sleep
mf


42
p
Ped. freely
49
p
Now that the moon is enthralled with a wall
What can I do, if one of
56
mf
us is ly - ing on the earth
mf


62
p
and the o - ther is lost in the
p
67
sky
mf

BORROWED LOVE SONGS

4

John Yau

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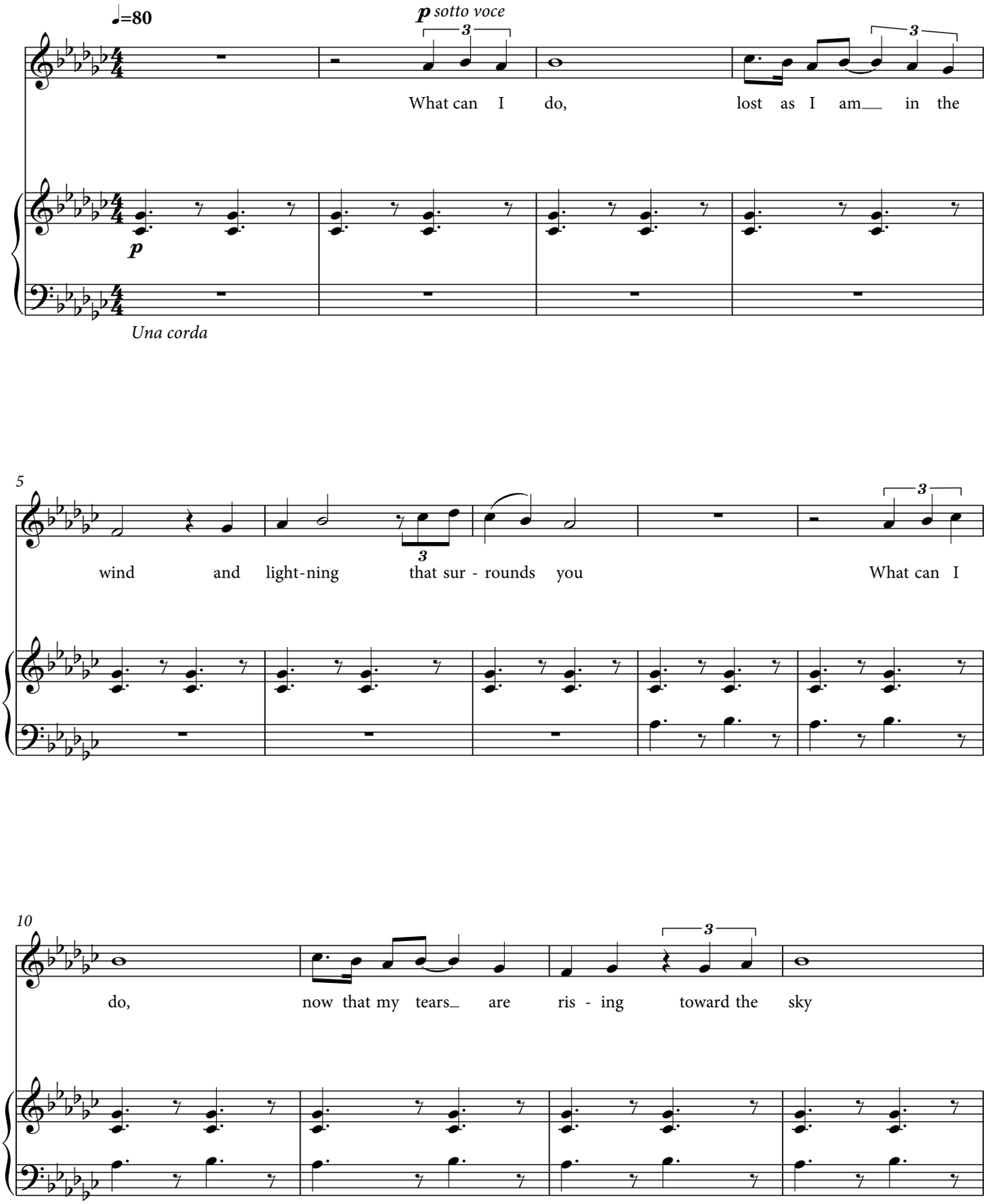

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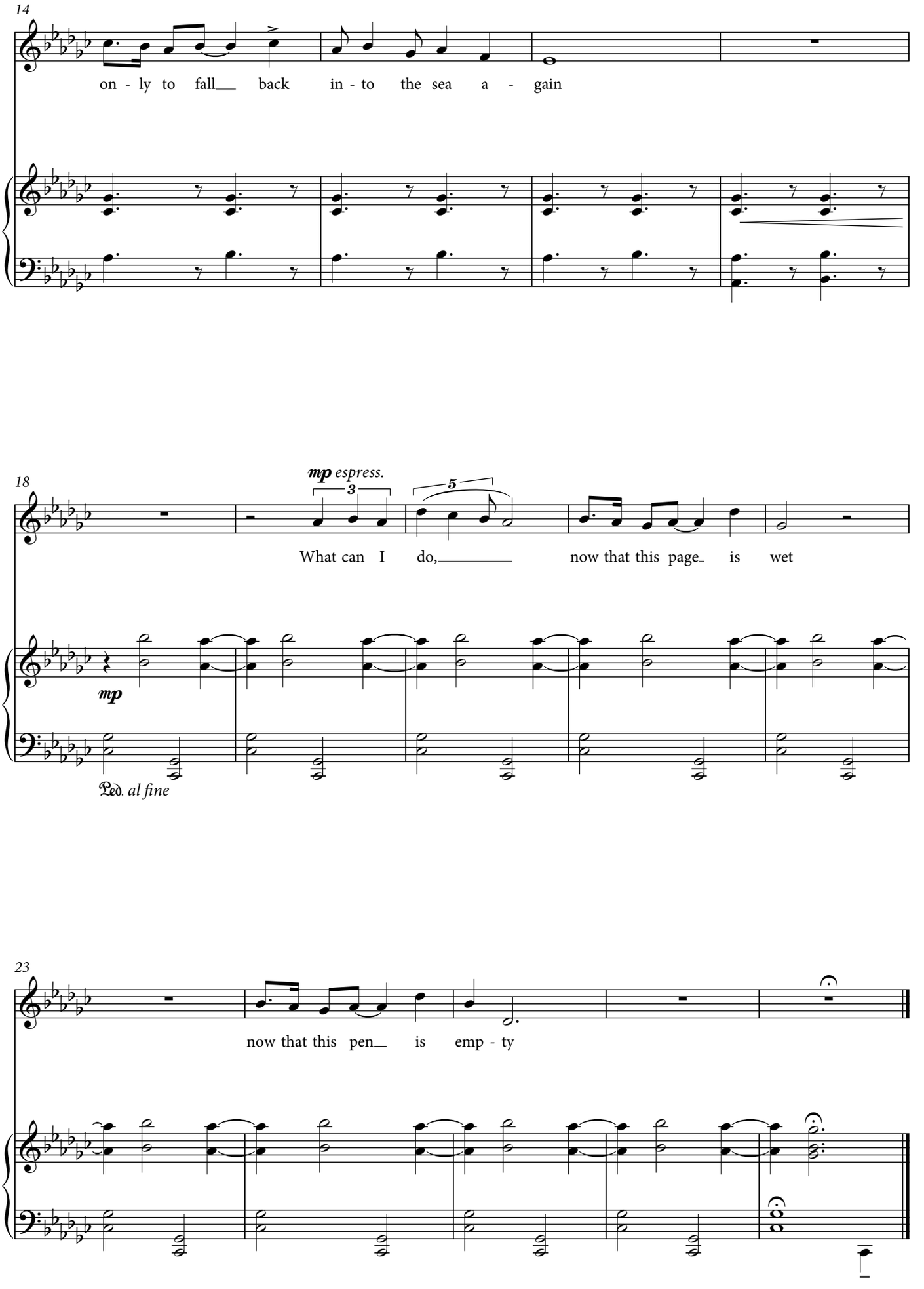
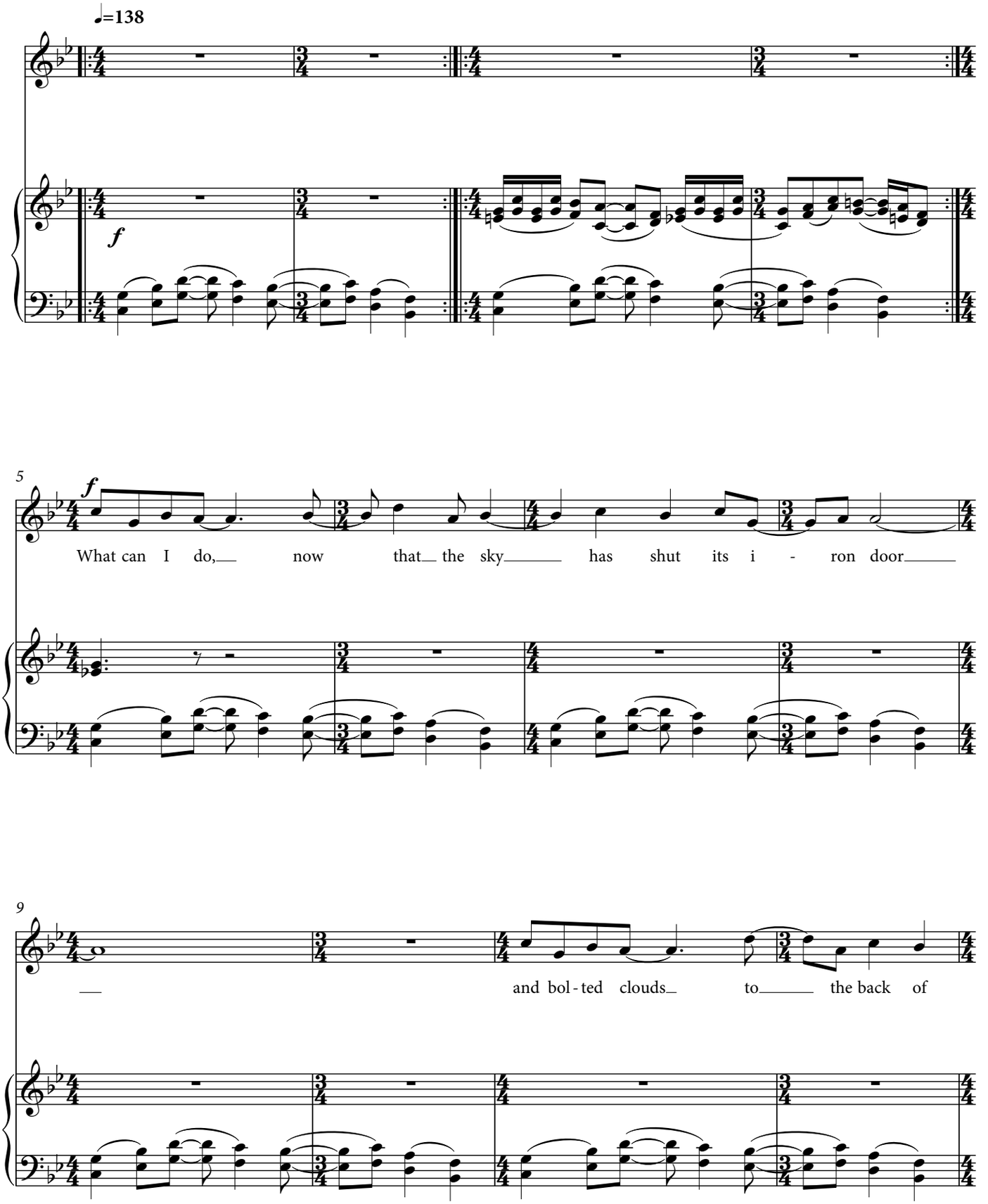

14
on - ly to fall back in - to the sea a - gain
18
mp espress.
3
5
What can I do, now that this page is wet
mp
Ped. al fine
23
now that this pen is emp - ty

BORROWED LOVE SONGS

5

John Yau

Eric Shanfield



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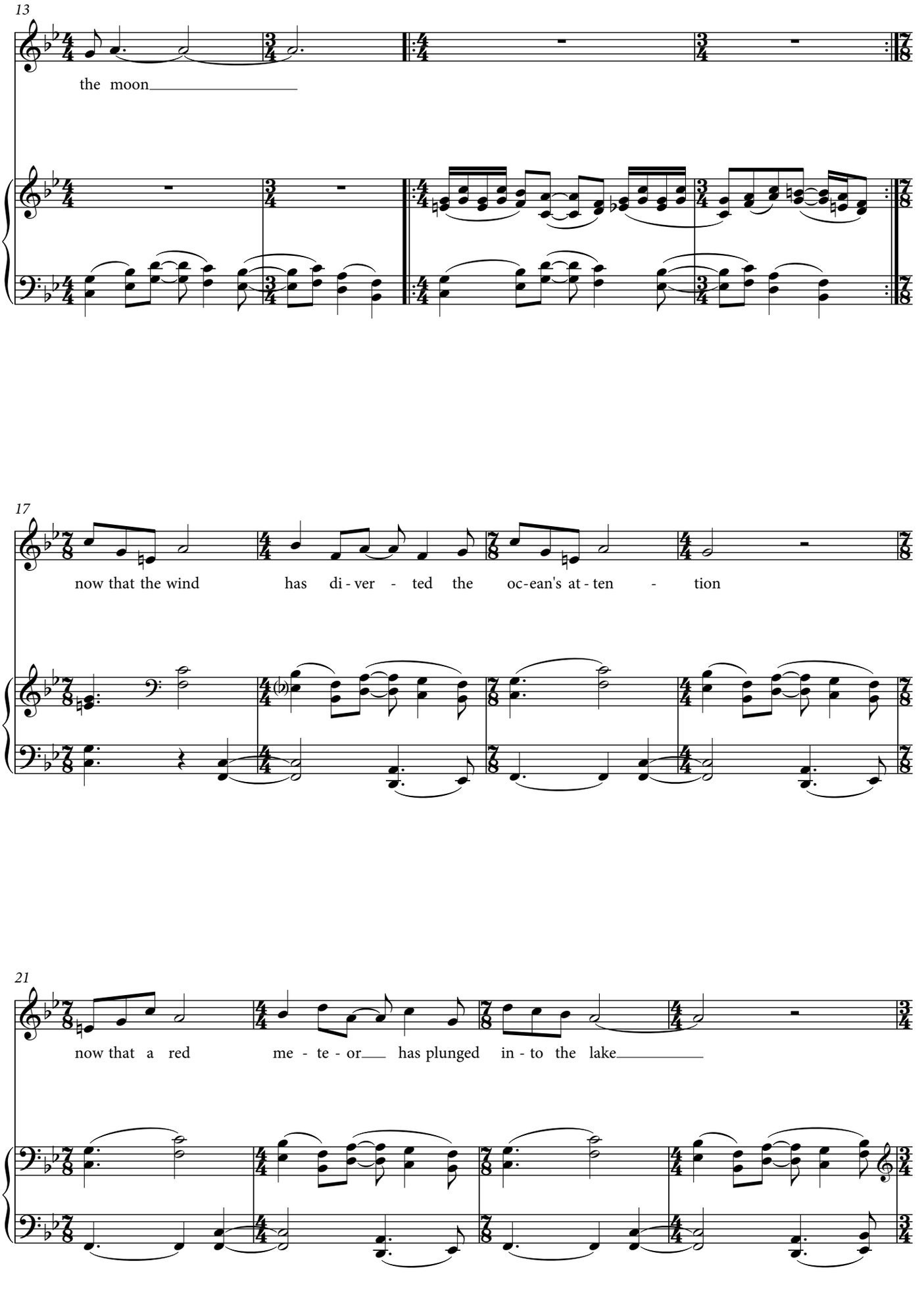
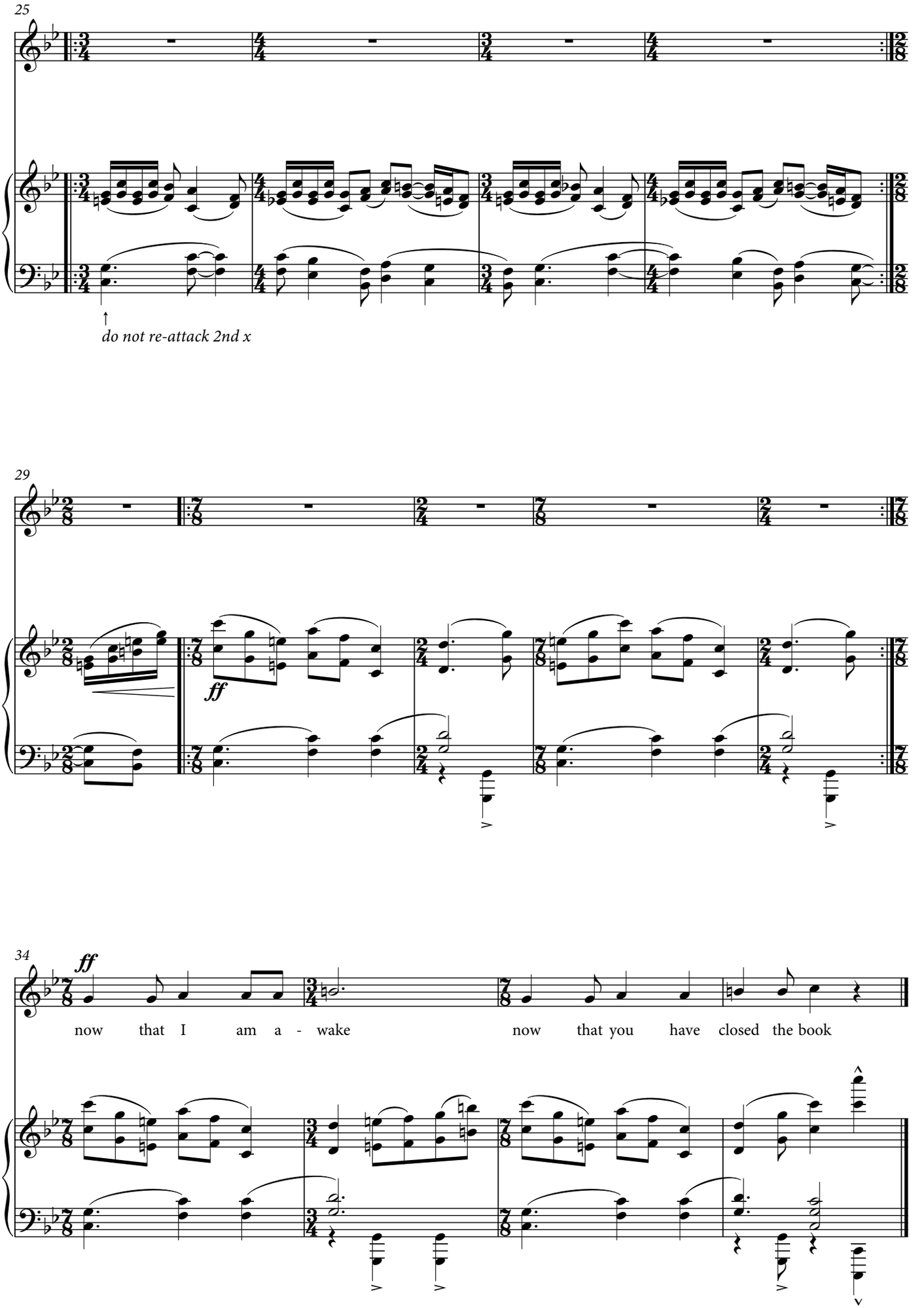

13
the moon
17
now that the wind has di - ver - ted the oc-ean's at - ten - tion
21
now that a red me - te - or has plunged in - to the lake

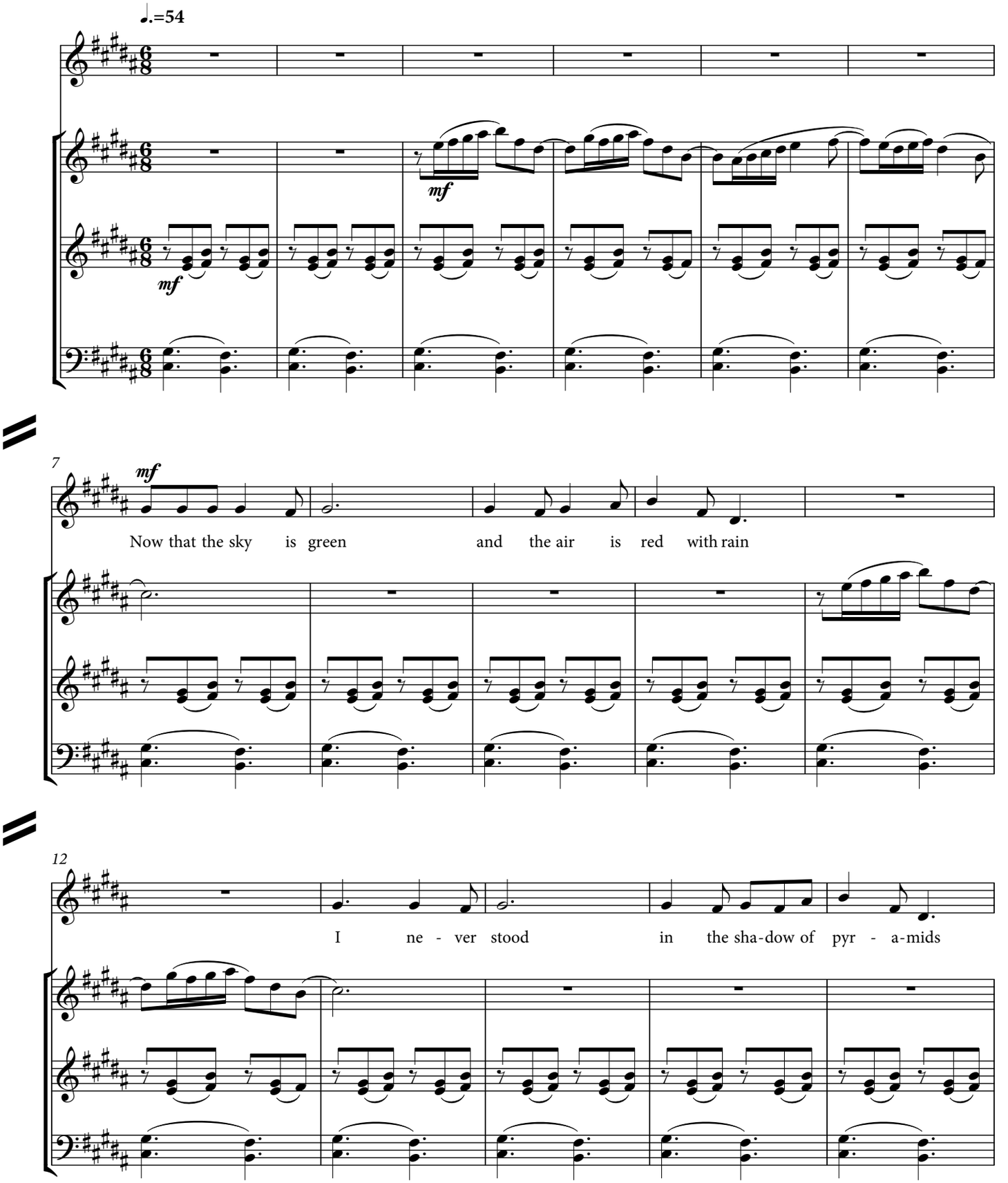

25
do not re-attack 2nd x
29
ff
34
ff
now that I am a - wake now that you have closed the book

BORROWED LOVE SONGS

6

John Yau

Eric Shanfield



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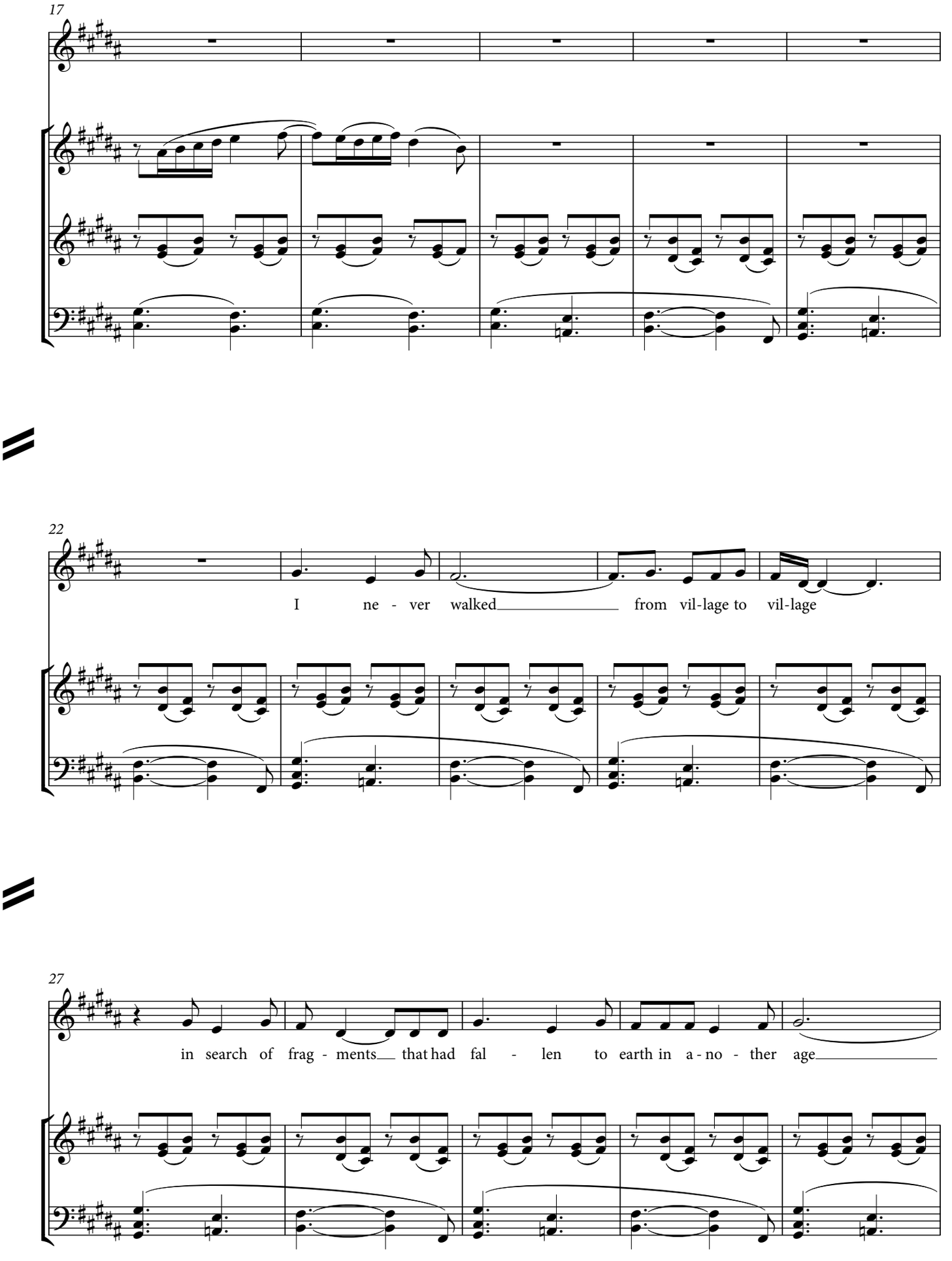
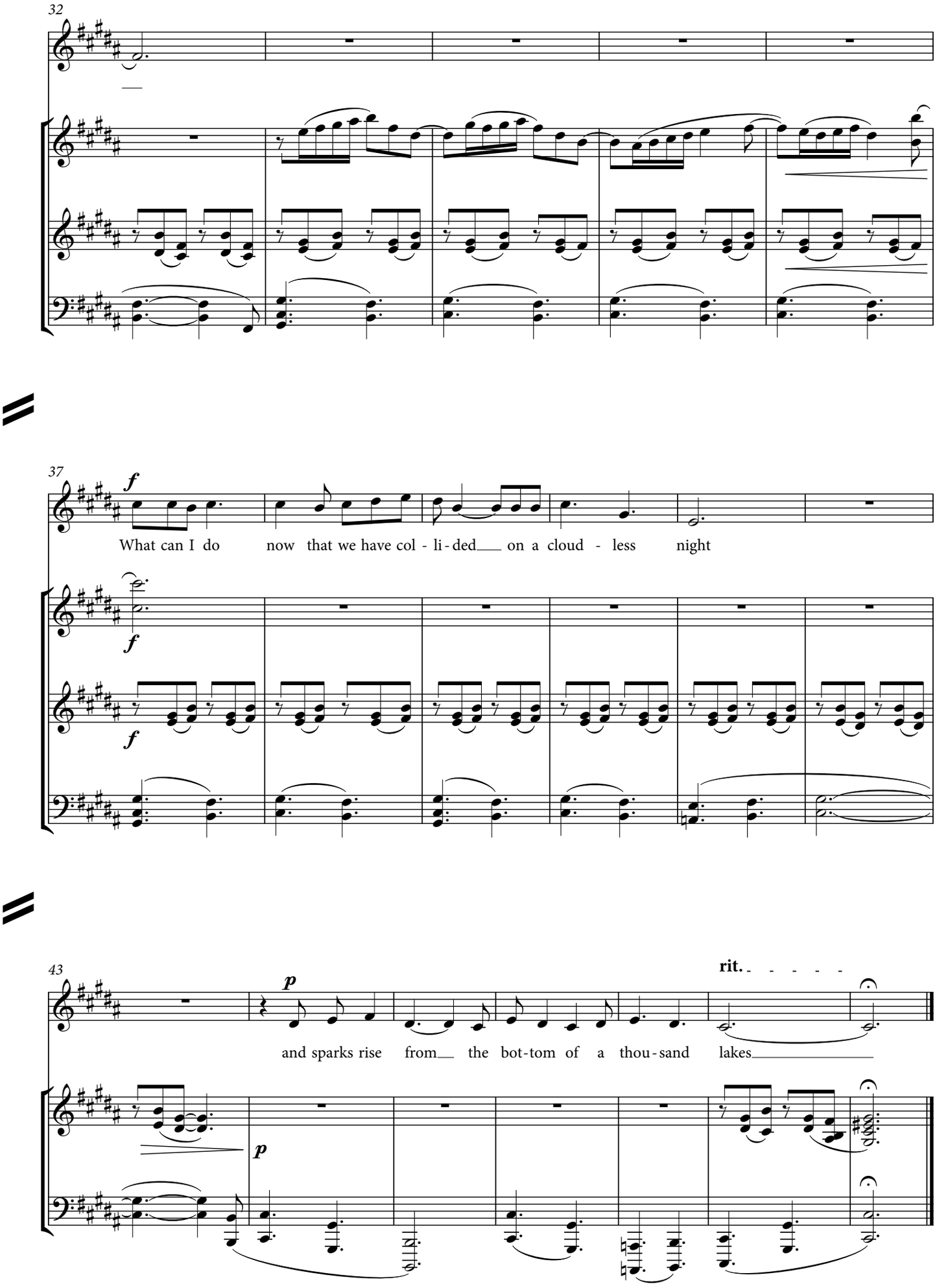

17
22
I ne - ver walked from vil-lage to vil-lage
27
in search of frag - ments that had fal - len to earth in a - no - ther age


32
37
f
What can I do now that we have col - li - ded on a cloud - less night
43
p
and sparks rise from the bot-tom of a thou-sand lakes
rit.

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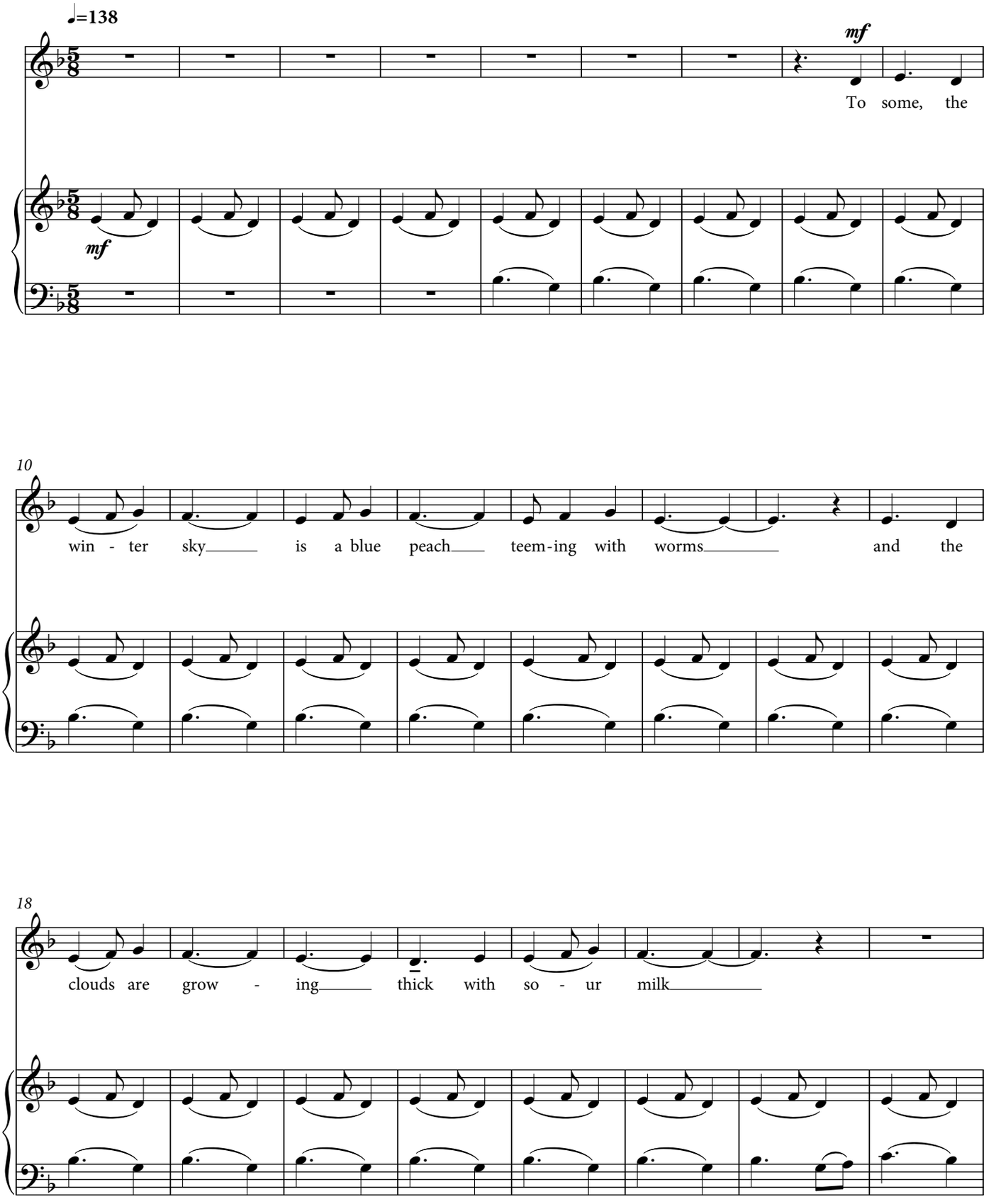

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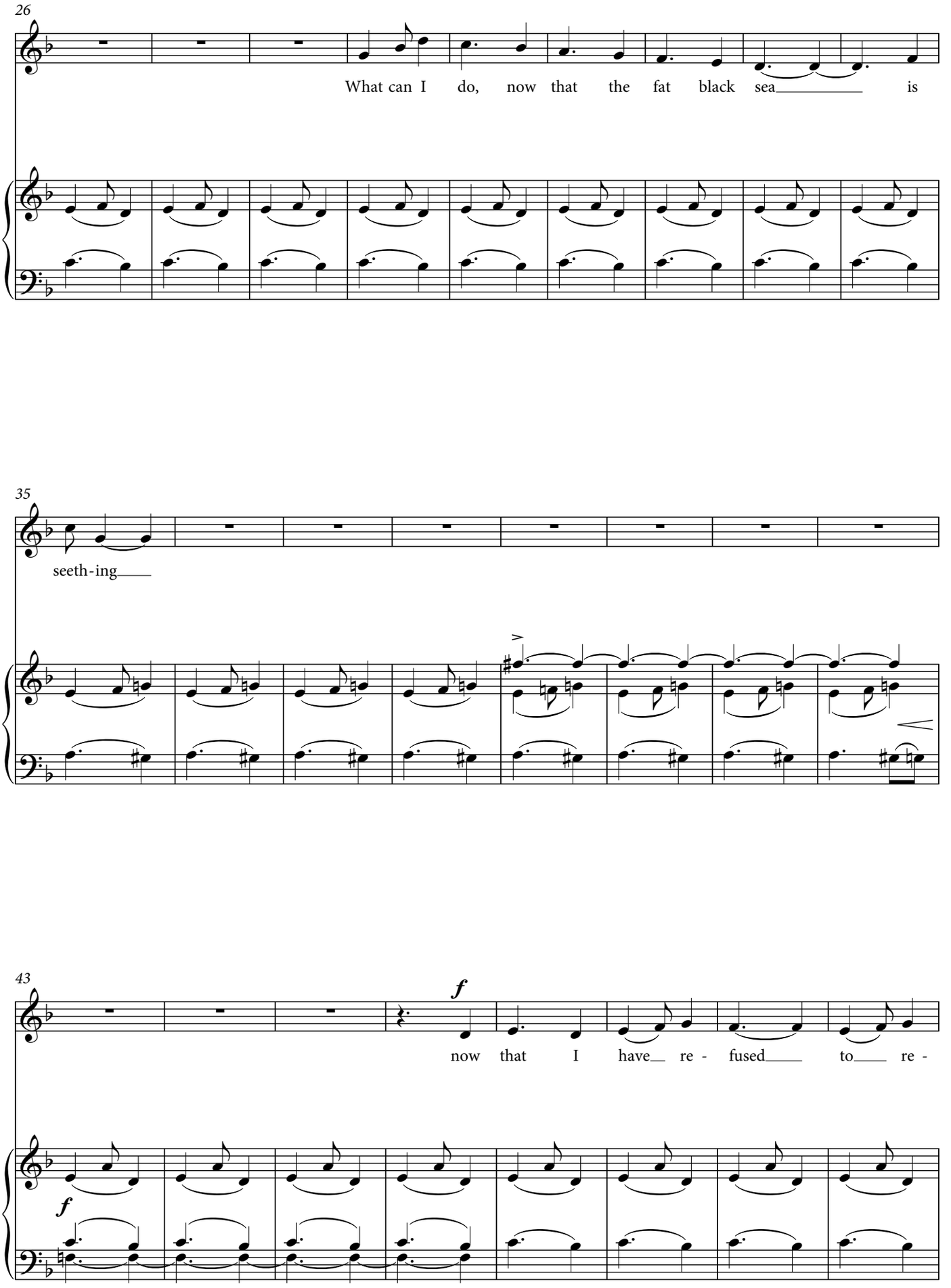
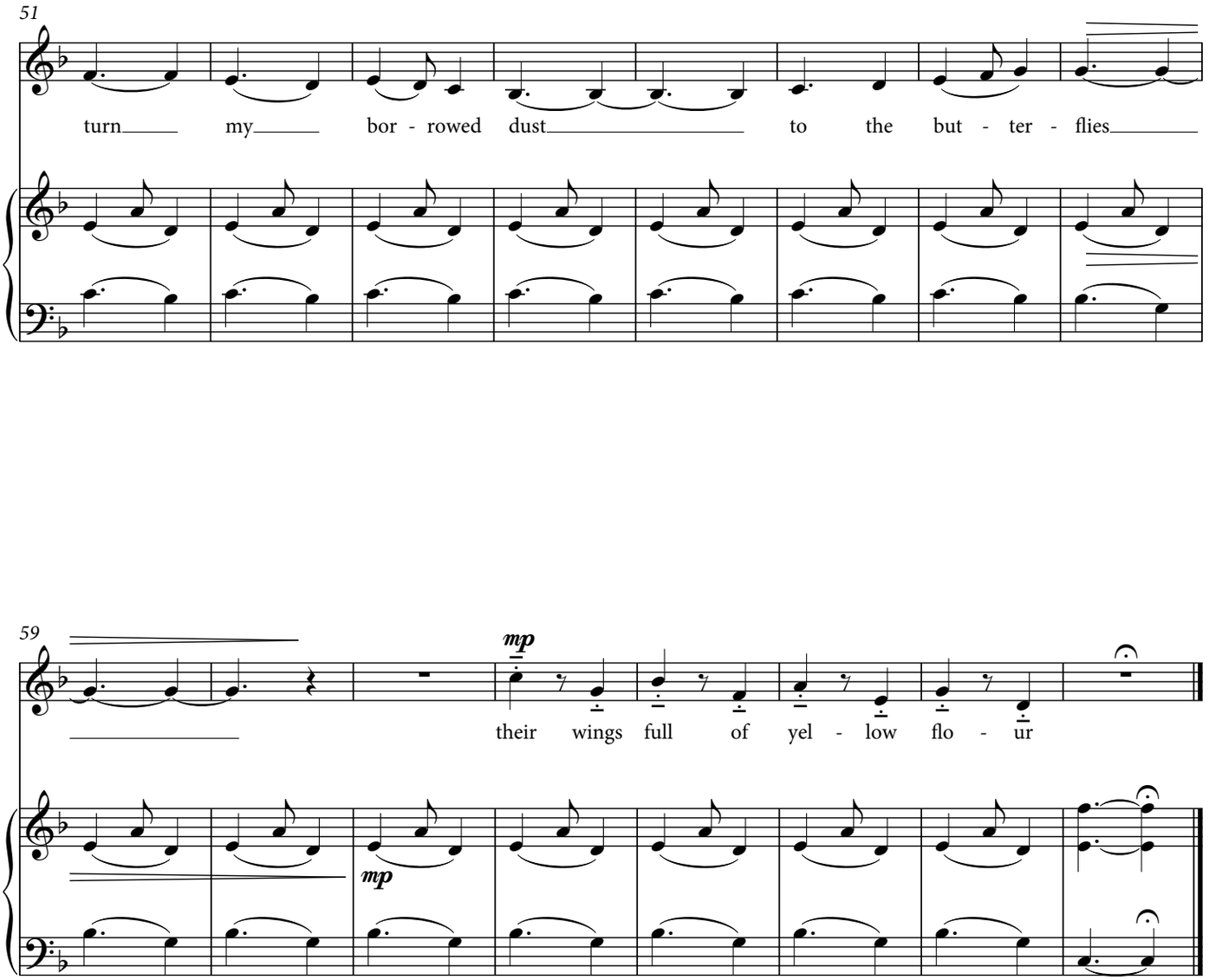

26
What can I do, now that the fat black sea is
35
seeth-ing
43
f
now that I have re - fused to re -
f

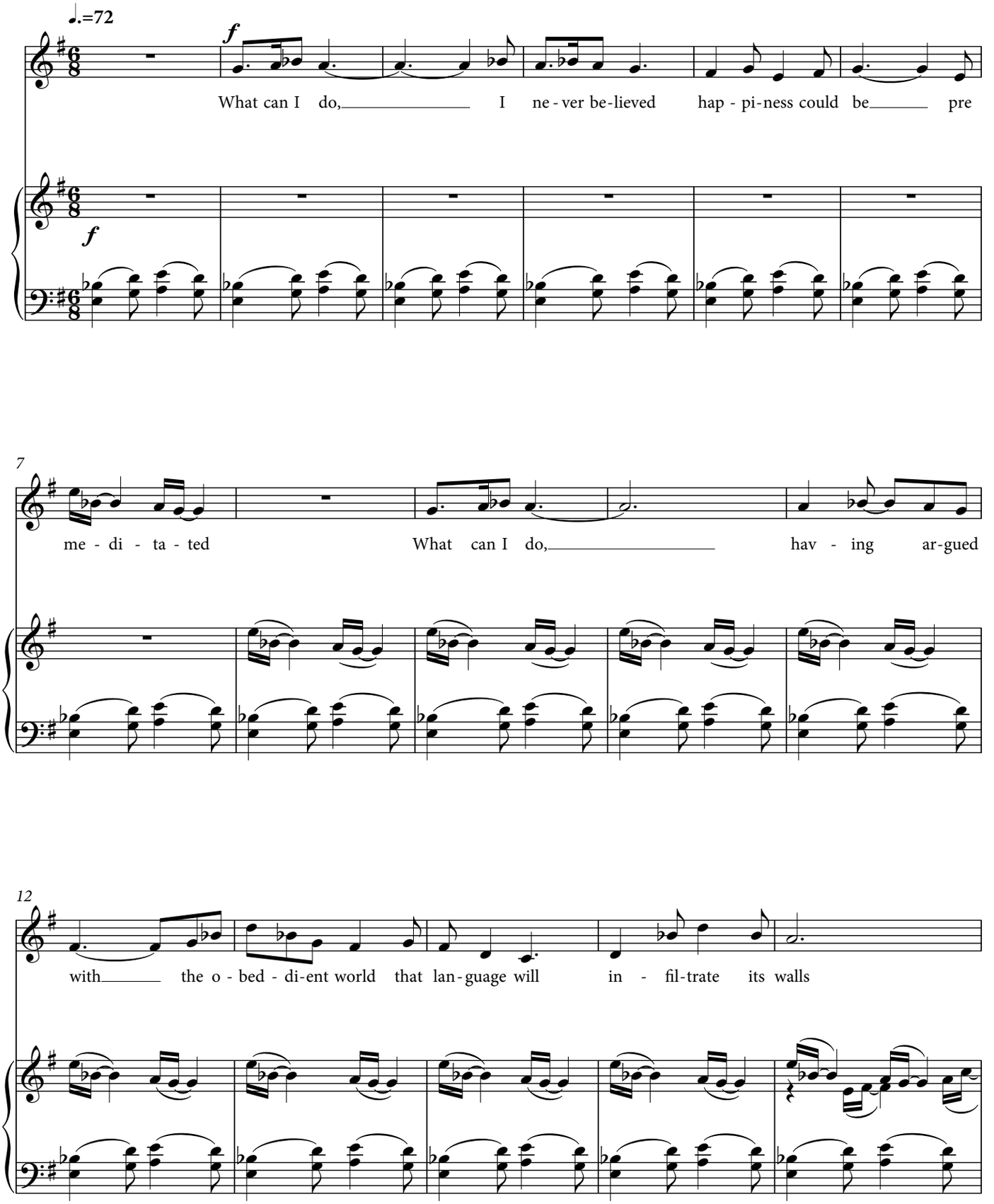

51
turn my bor - rowed dust to the but - ter - flies
59
mp
their wings full of yel - low flo - ur
mp

BORROWED LOVE SONGS

8

John Yau

Eric Shanfield



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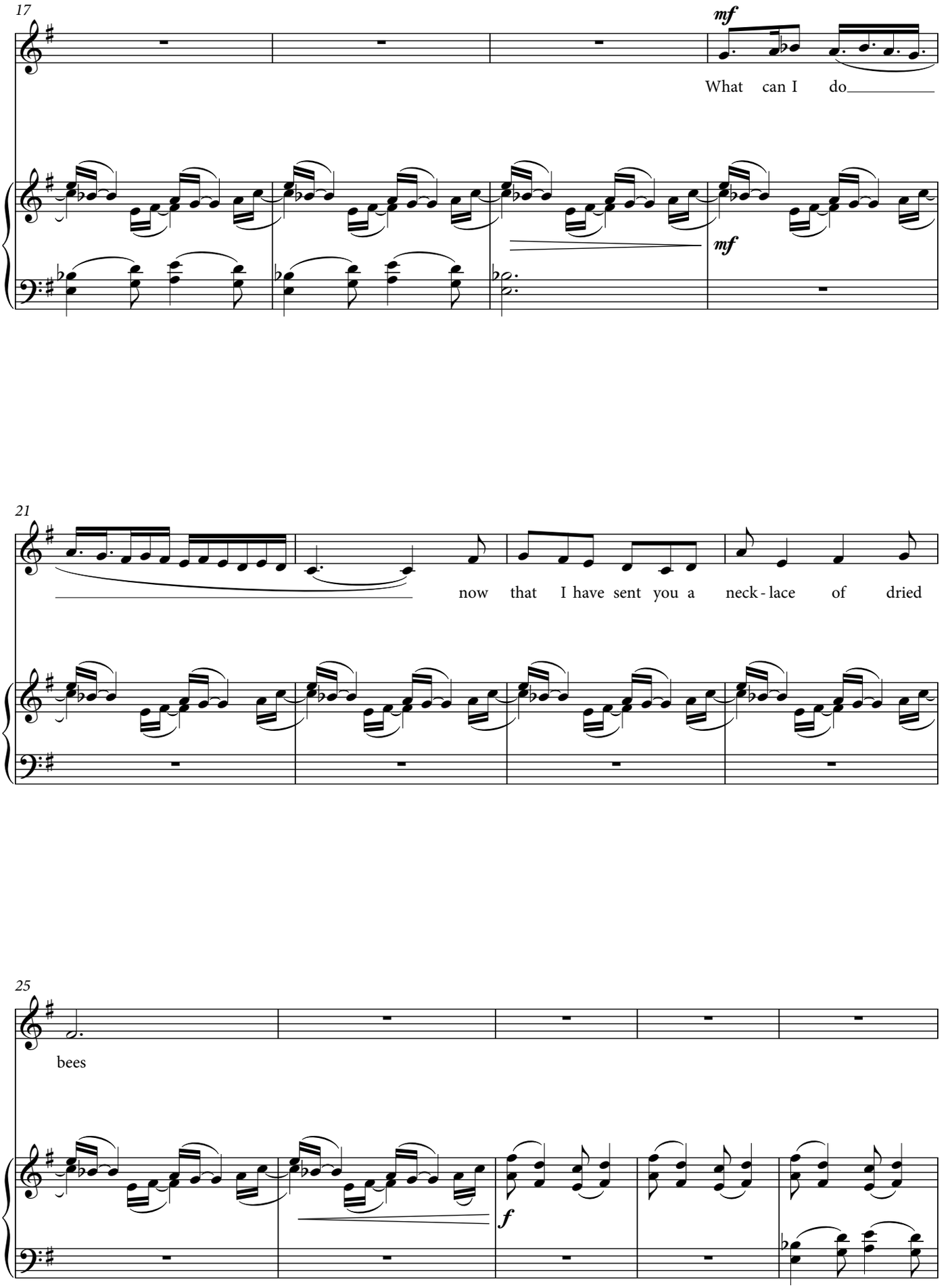
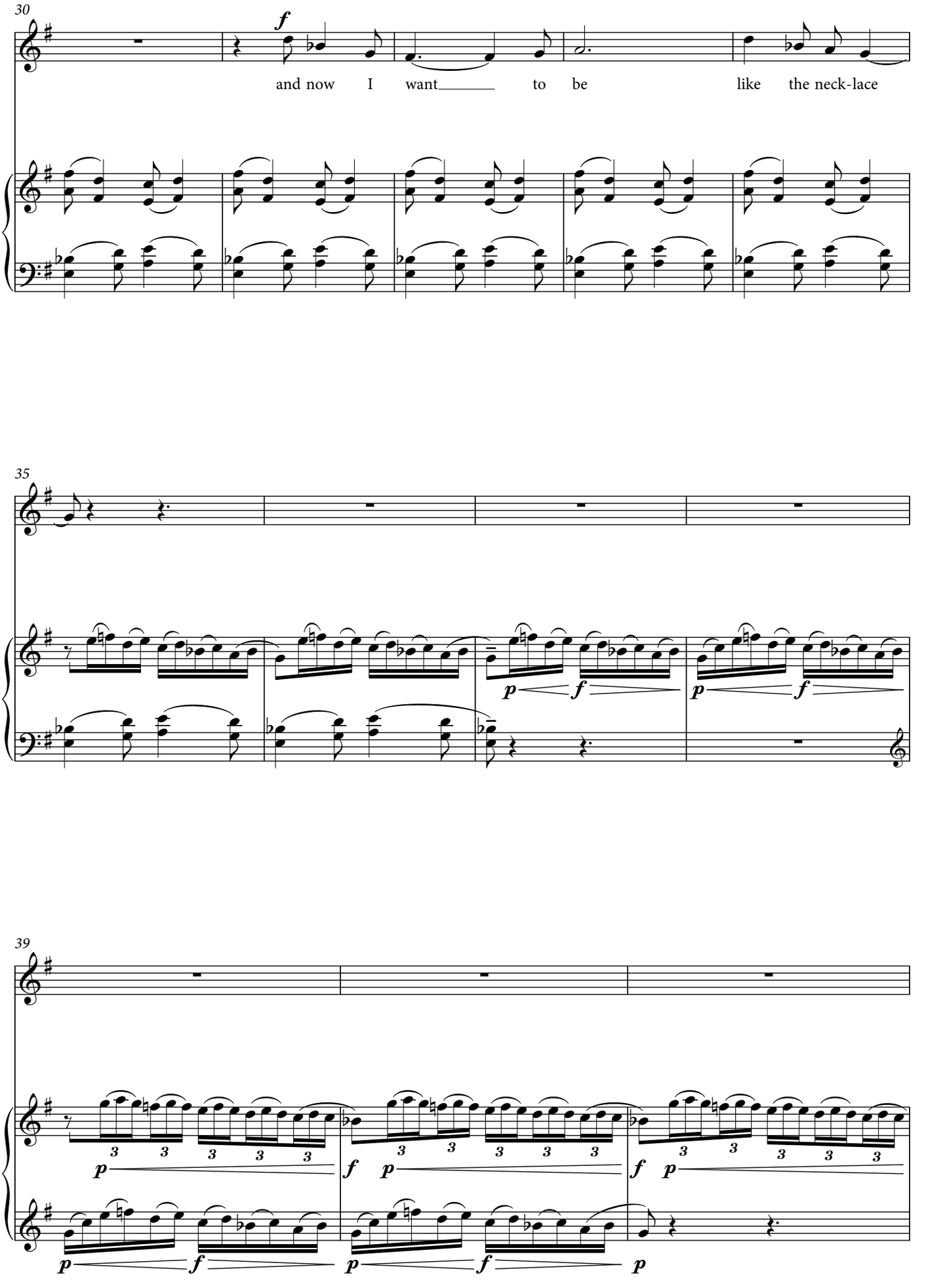
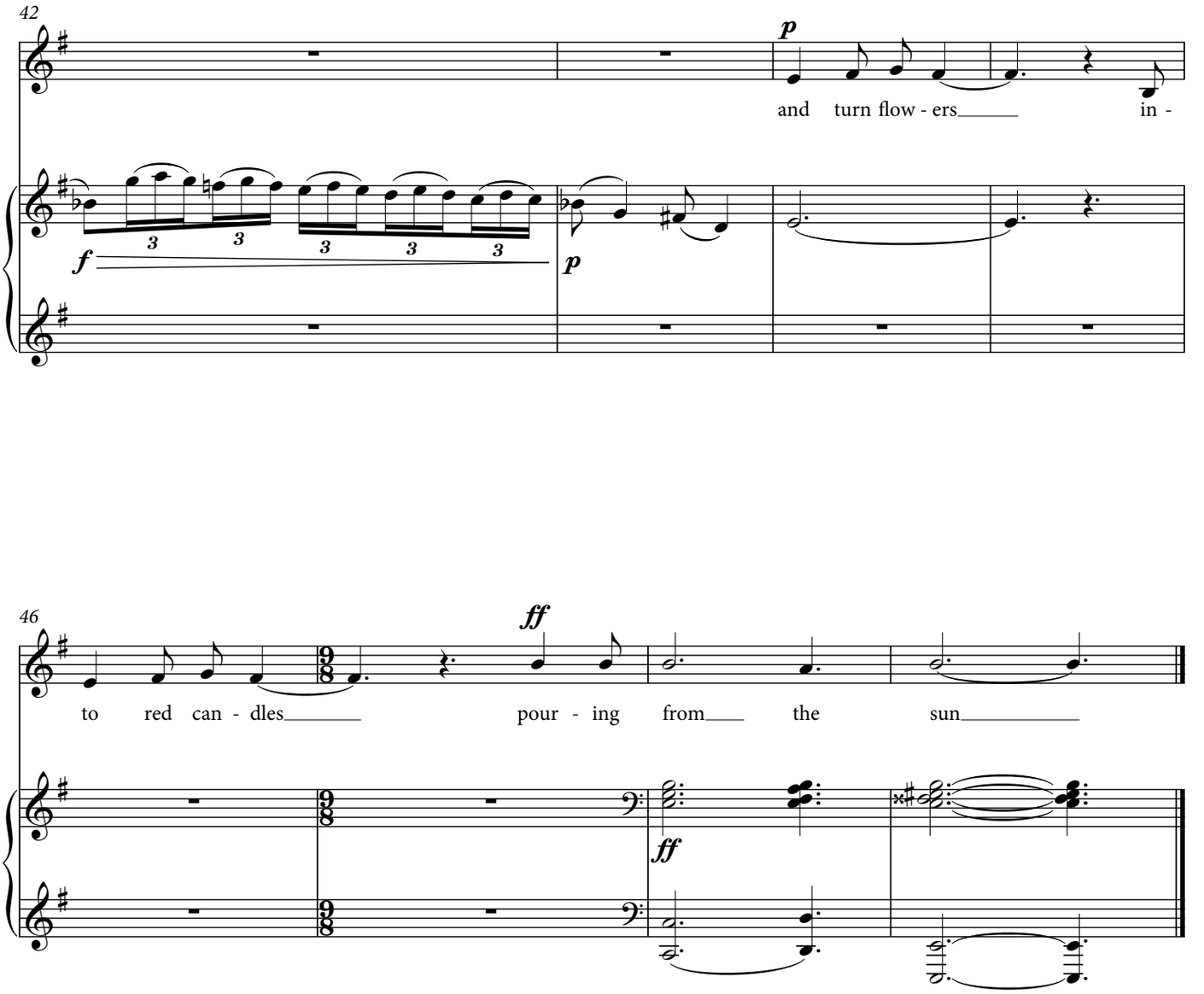

17
mf
What can I do
mf
21
now that I have sent you a neck - lace of dried
25
bees
f


30
f
and now I want to be like the neck-lace
35
p
f
39
p
f


42
p
and turn flow - ers in -
f
3
p

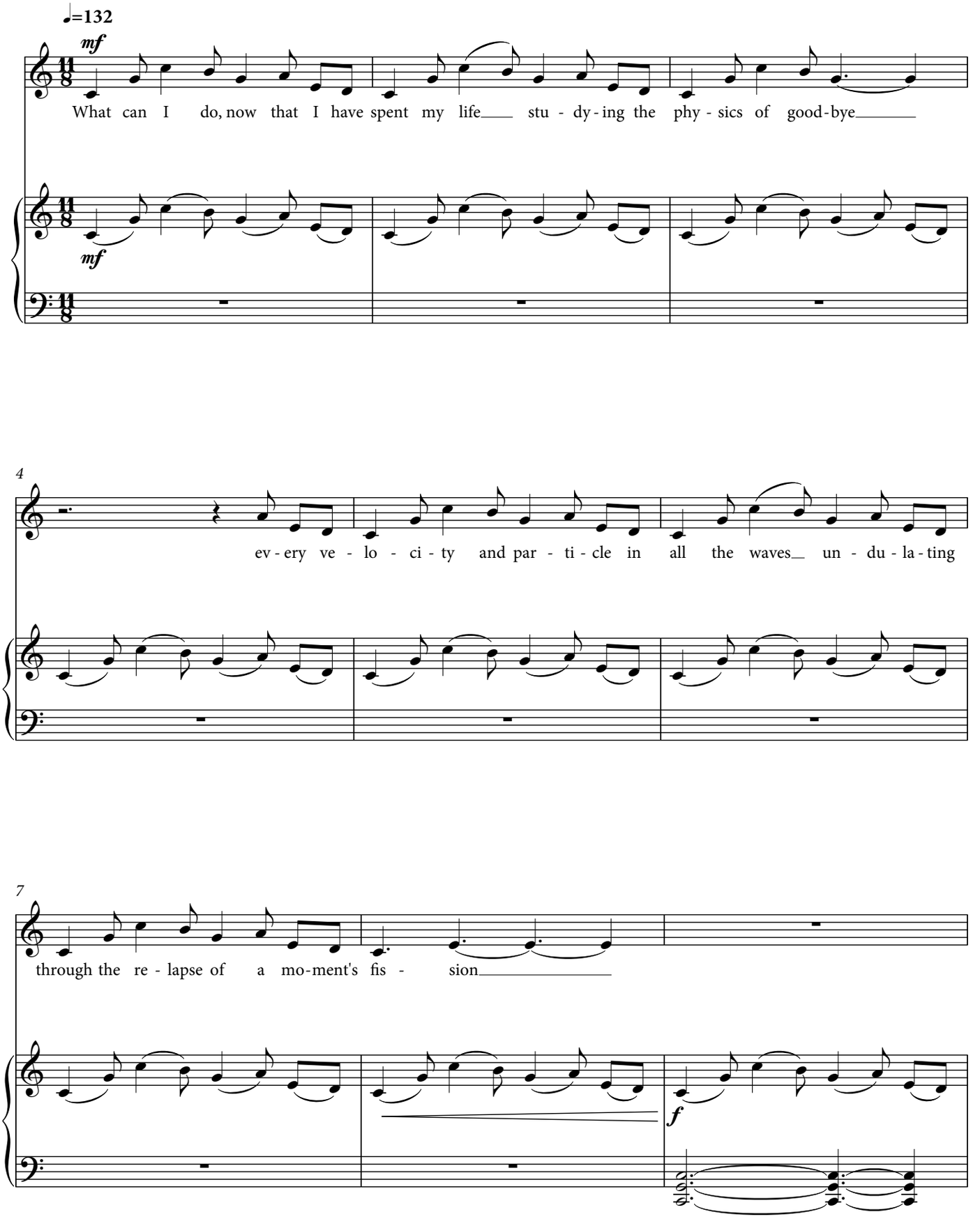
46
ff
to red can - dles pour - ing from the sun
ff

BORROWED LOVE SONGS

9

John Yau

Eric Shanfield



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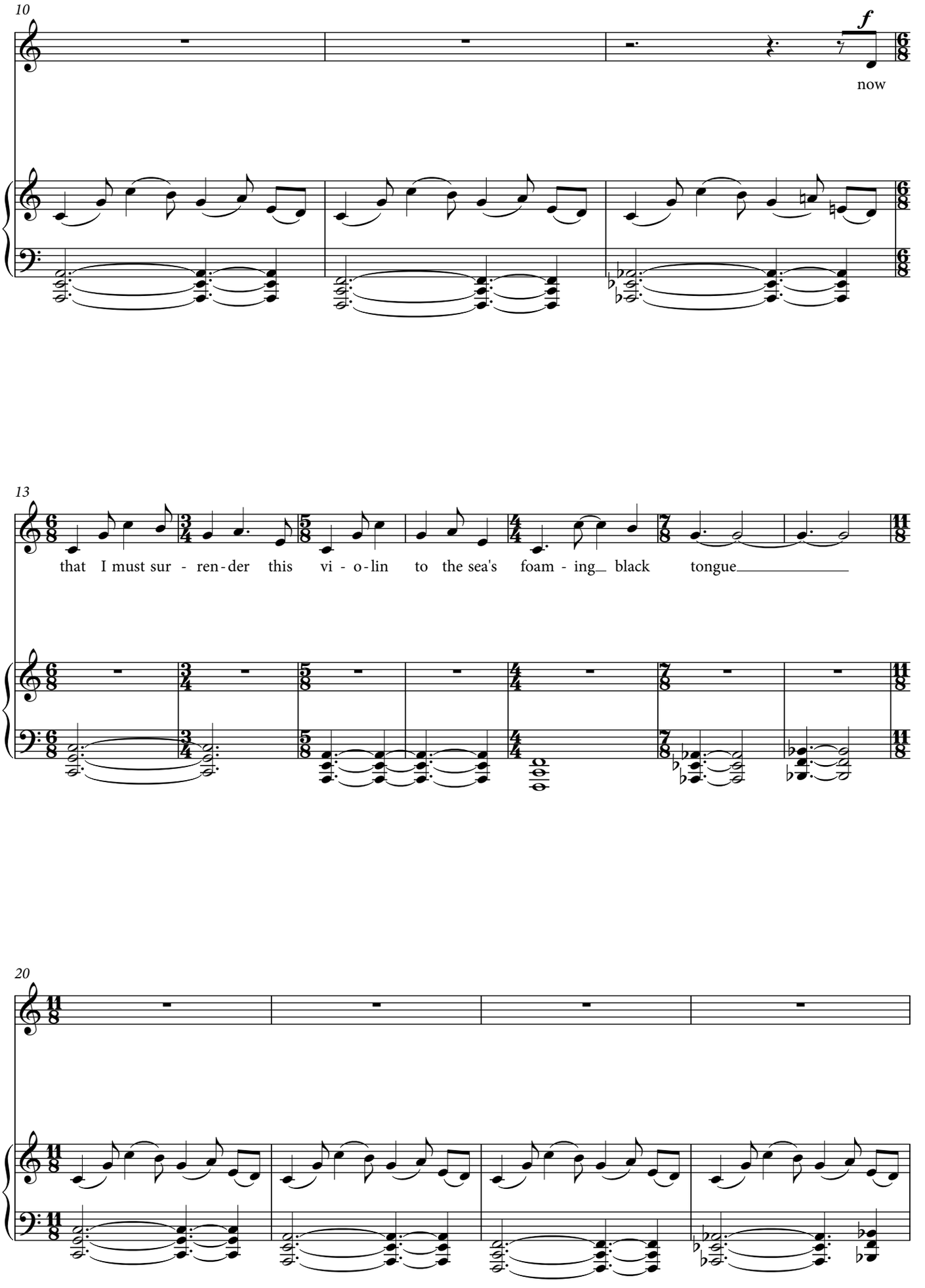
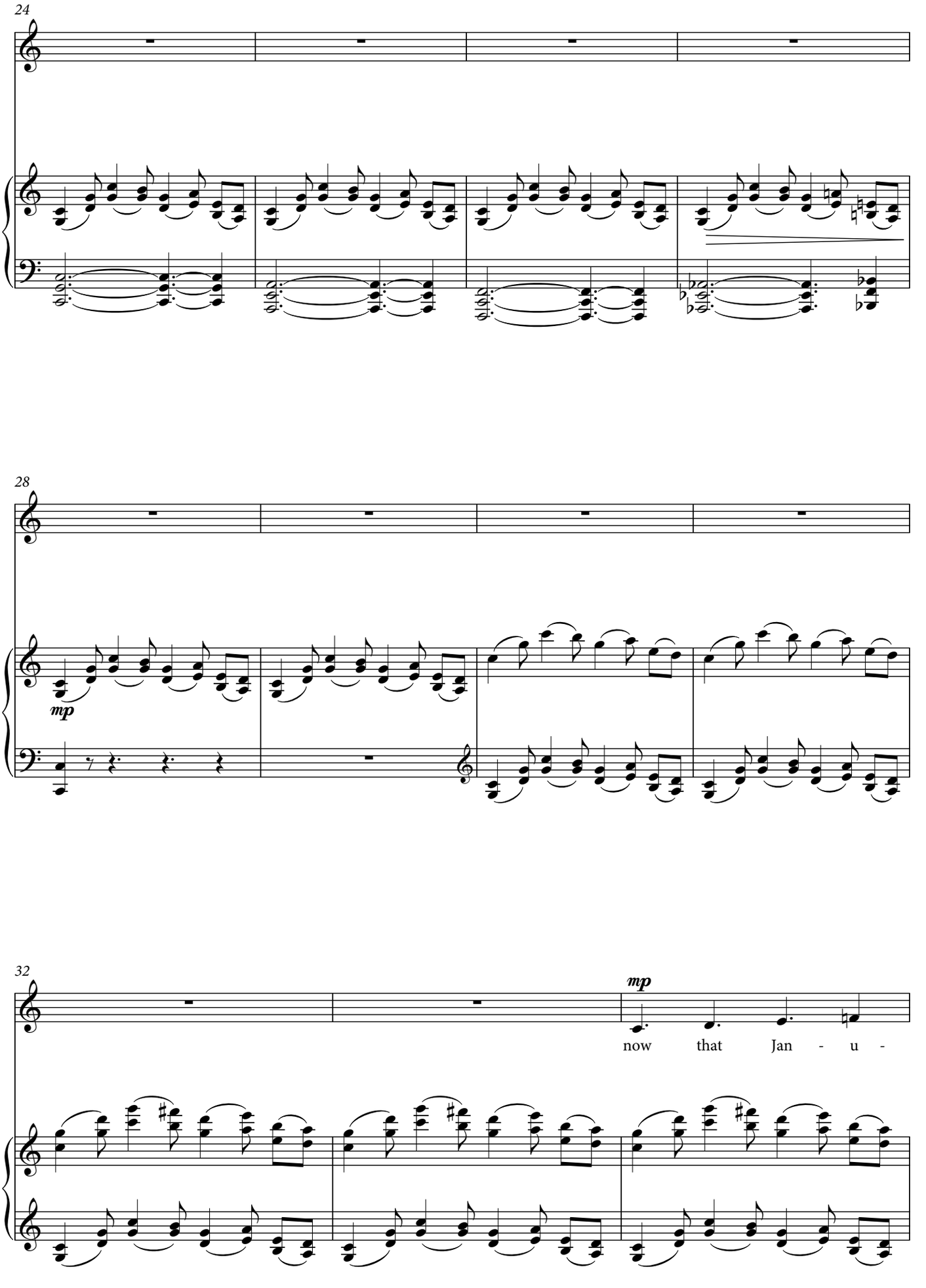
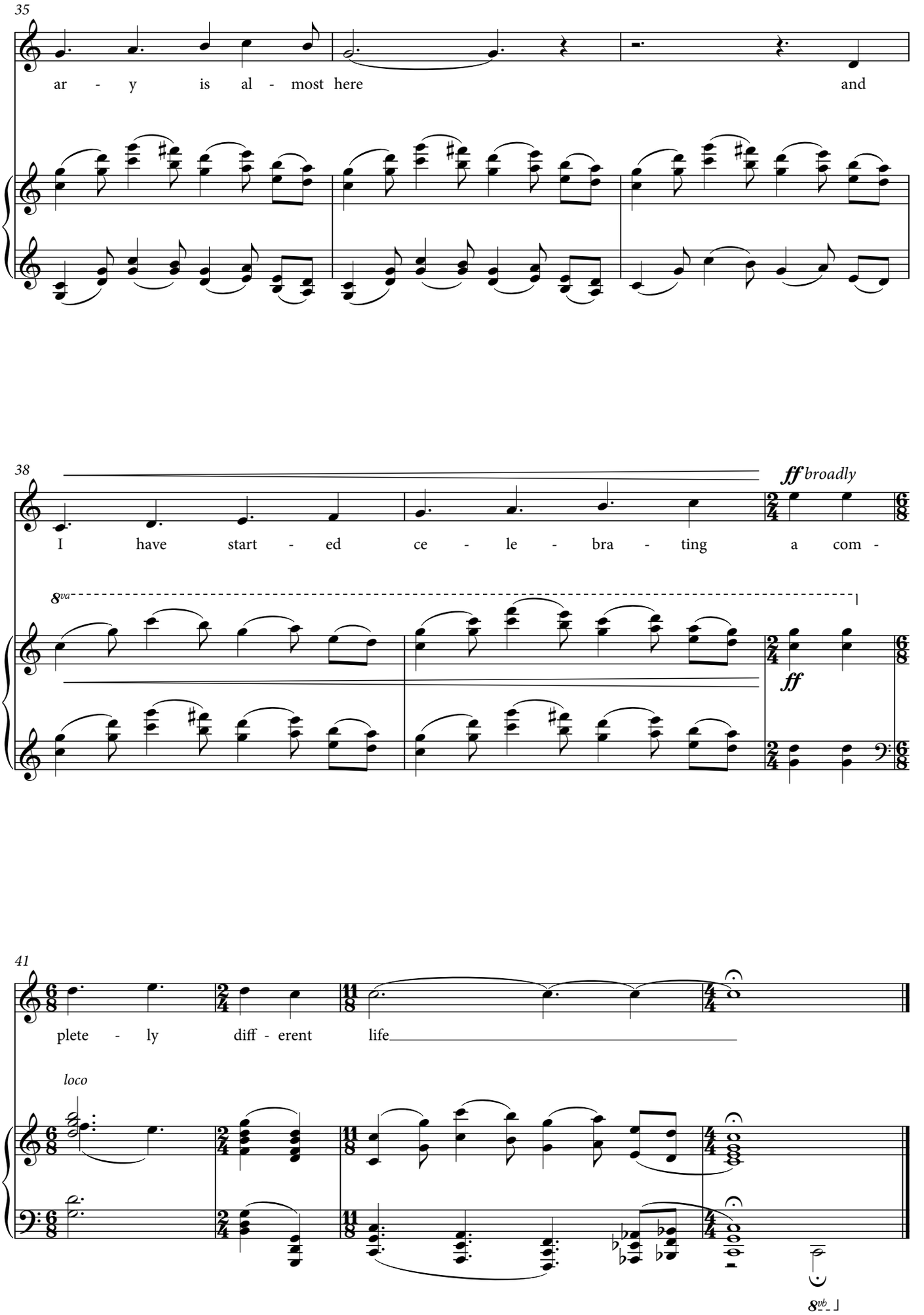

10
f
now
13
that I must sur - ren - der this vi - o - lin to the sea's foam - ing_ black tongue_____
20


24
28
mp
32
mp
now that Jan - u -

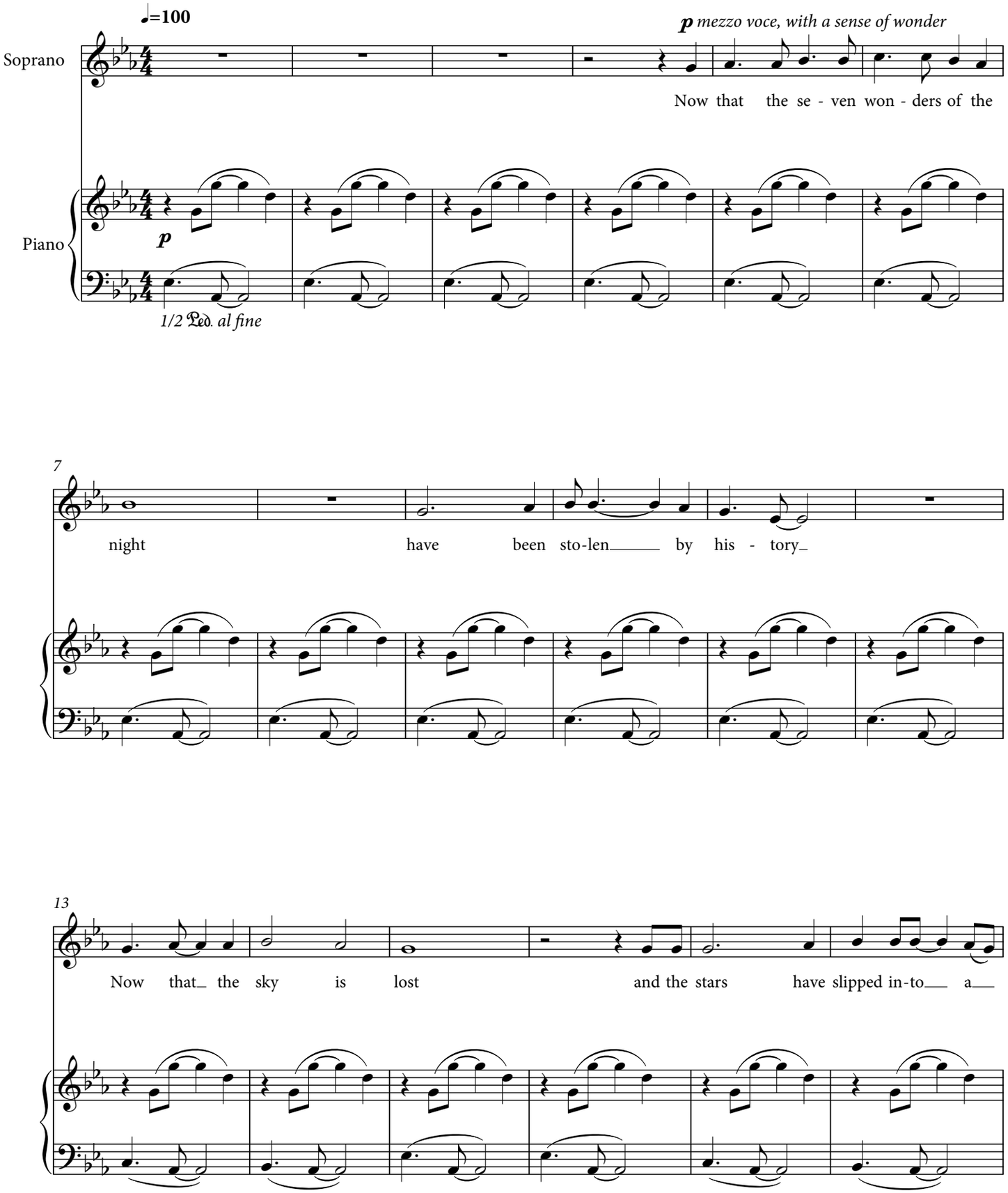

35
ar - y is al - most here and
38
ff broadly
I have start - ed ce - le - bra - ting a com -
8va
ff
41
plete - ly diff - erent life
loco
8vb

BORROWED LOVE SONGS

10

John Yau

Eric Shanfield



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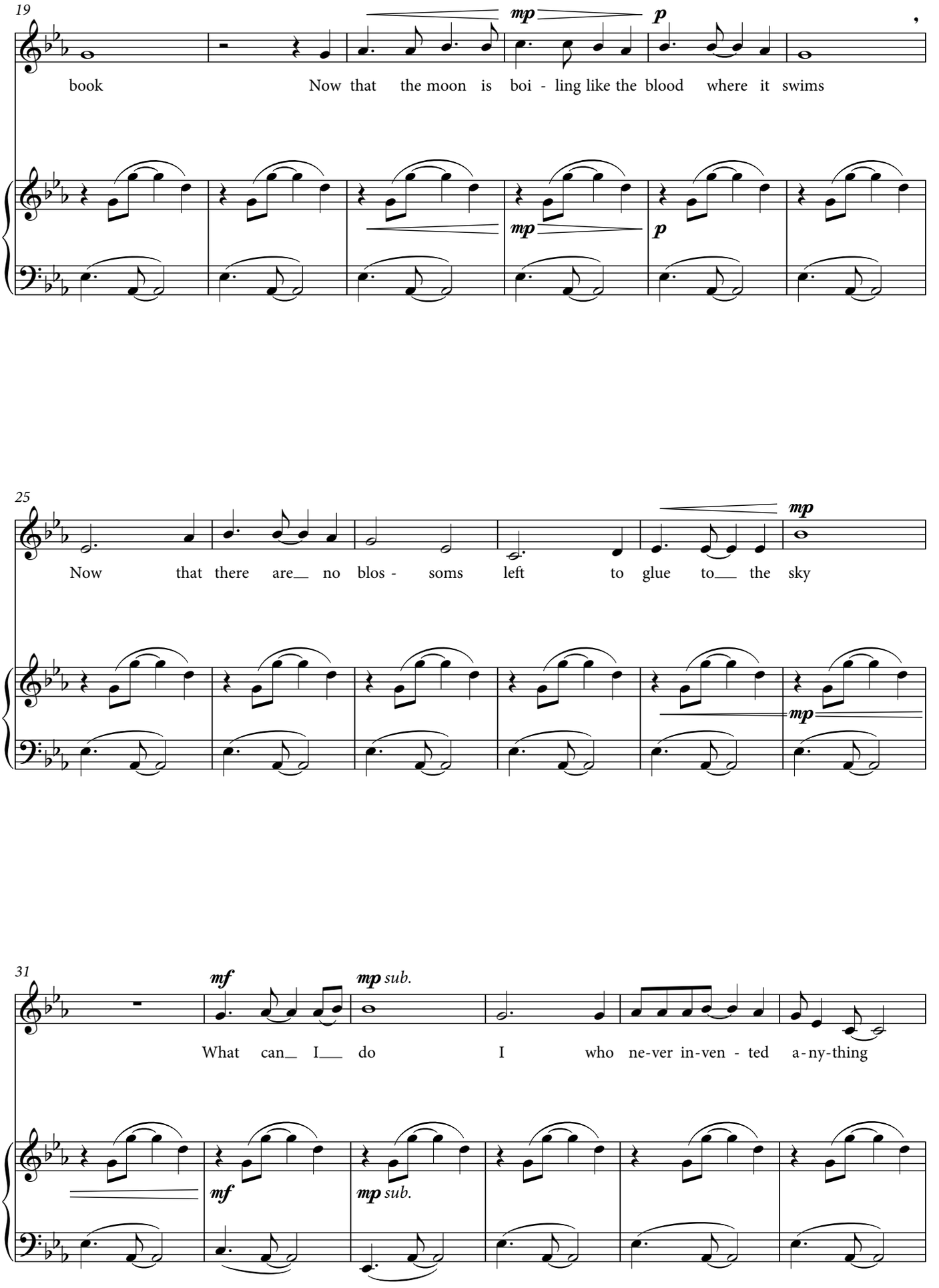
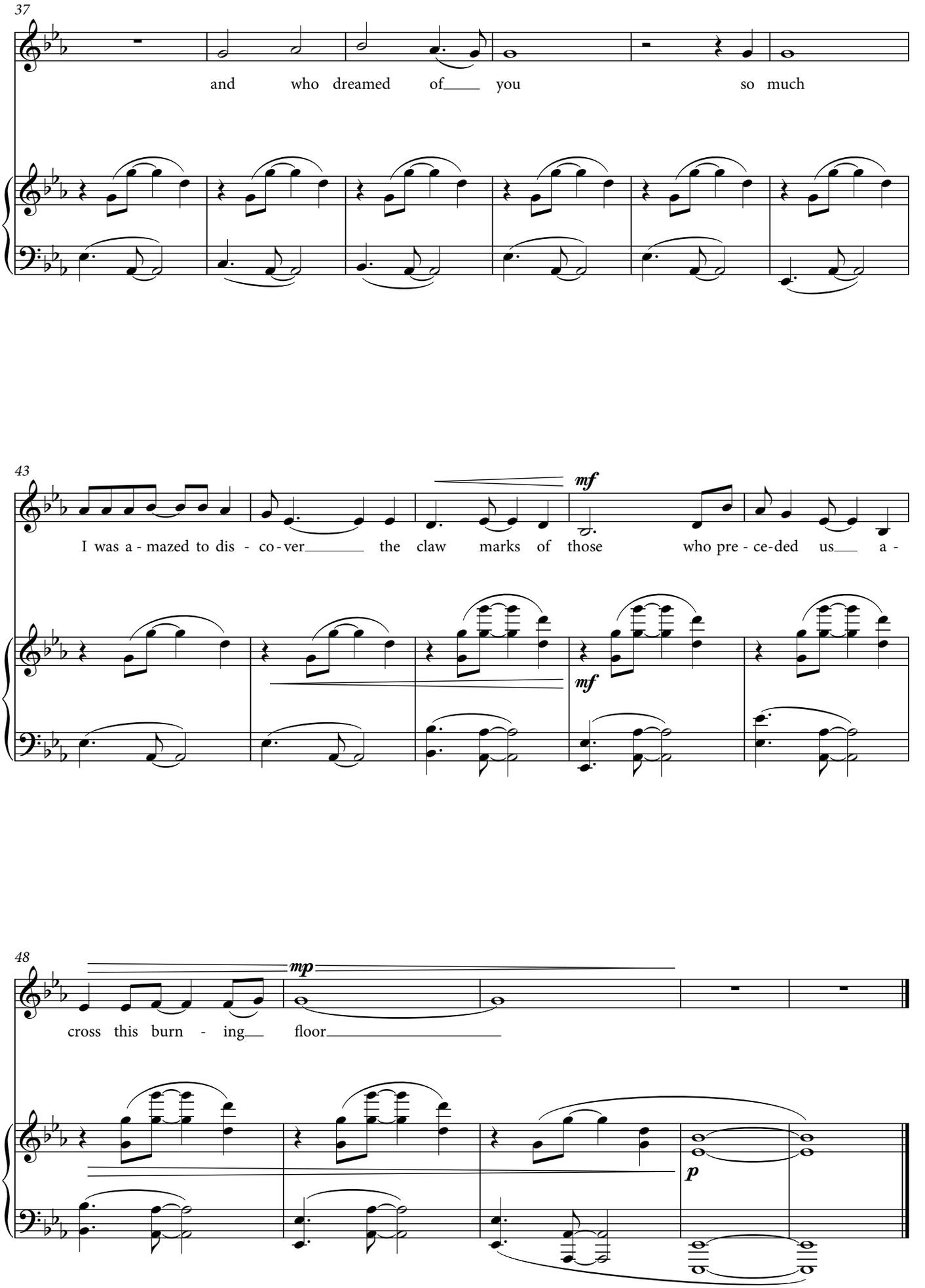

19
mp
p
book
Now that the moon is boi - ling like the blood where it swims
mp
p
25
mp
Now that there are no blos - soms left to glue to the sky
mp
31
mf
mp sub.
What can I do
I who ne-ver in-ven - ted a-ny-thing
mf
mp sub.


37
and who dreamed of you so much
43
mf
I was a - mazed to dis - co - ver the claw marks of those who pre - ce-ded us a -
mf
48
mp
cross this burn - ing floor
p