John Link

She Speaks

for Mezzo-Soprano and Piano
poem by Hilda Raz

PROGRAM NOTE

In setting Hilda Raz's wonderful poem *She Speaks*, I have tried to find musical analogues for the contrasting views of the Garden and the world voiced in the poem. Where Adam is blunt and iron-clad, the narrator (and perhaps the poet) see things in a more variegated light. The allusion at the end of the last stanza, which Adam would surely cast as another monosyllable, is taken up instead by the piano in a brief coda.

—J.L

SHE SPEAKS

I sit in this summer house
and, Adam, I think of you
and your preposterous naming
and talking, your making the world
new each day — how exhausting —
and the tall banyans you drew up
out of the ground to show me;
each day the tangerine rose-hips,
the azure of an ocean you called
blue, meaning one color, and which
to my eye was *variegated*,
a word you had no use for;
parrots and sparrows you
feathered in one direction
not accounting for the variable
air currents; the rugosa
and its blatant fruit, so
provocative, so showy.

Outside the cottage now
you are no longer here,
a pale basswood flourishes
in all this salty weather
and numerous foliages evolve
nameless in the fresh water
rain. Animals whose plush fur
matts away the damp howl
for attention, beg
to be let into any shelter
but this one, Adam,
a house of women
with no names, only
a companionable silence
that admits no visitors;
only later, perhaps, an orange
presence in a circle of stones,
now like the sun, now the moon,
now flickering, now pausing,
now going soundlessly up.

— Hilda Raz

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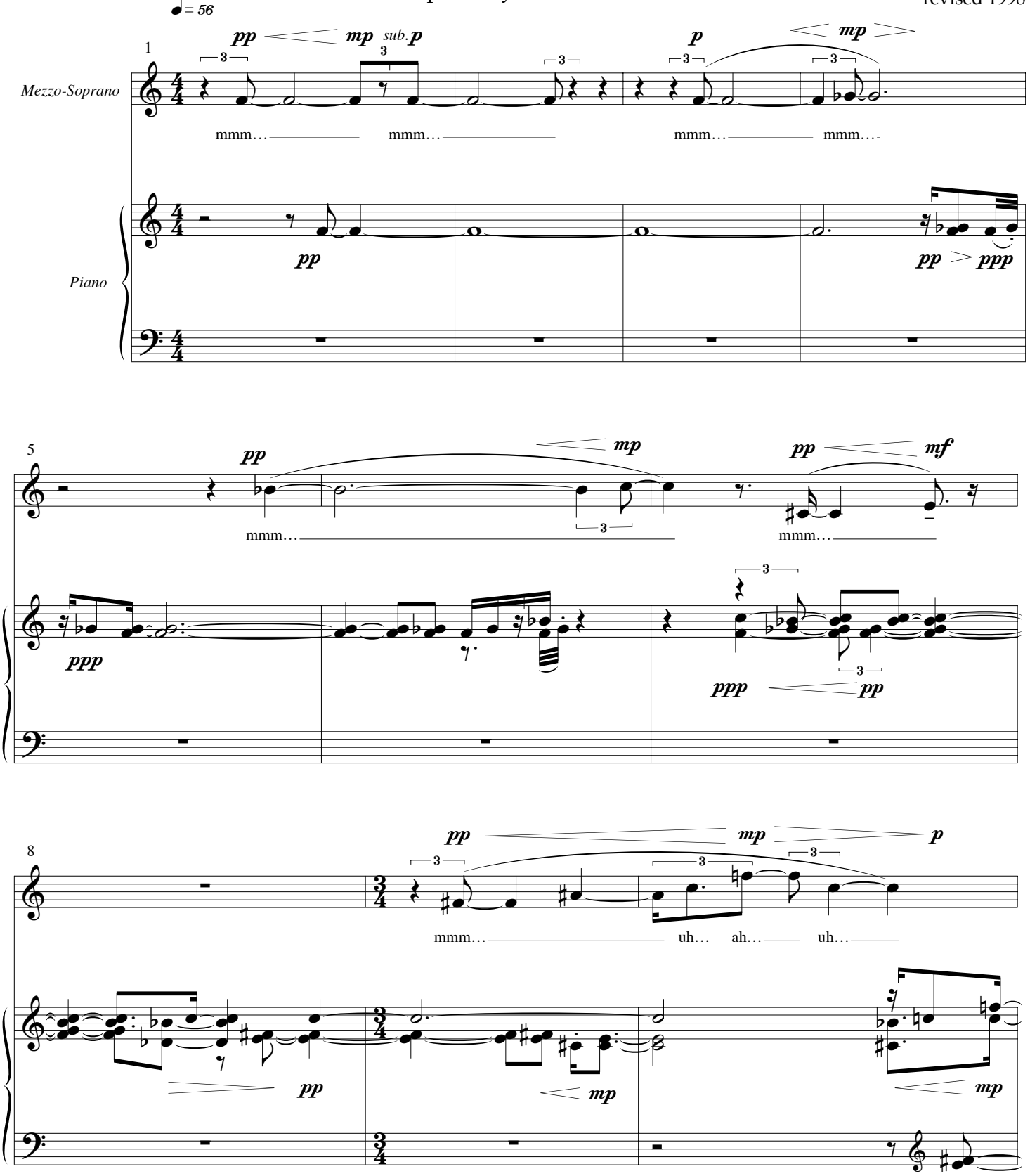
From the collection *What is Good* published by Thorntree Press, Inc.

for Hilda Raz for her birthday

She Speaks

poem by Hilda Raz

— John Link (1993)
revised 1998



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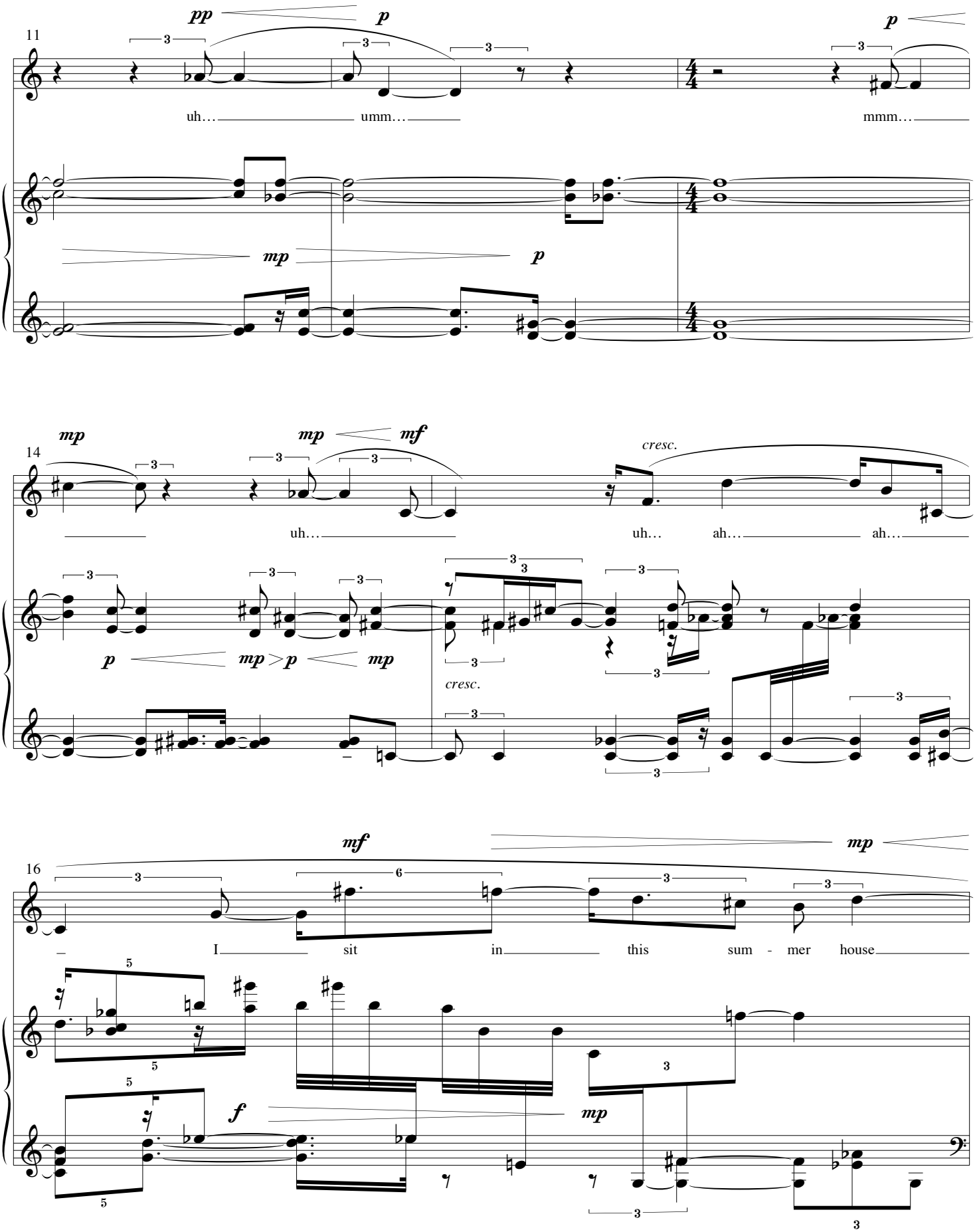
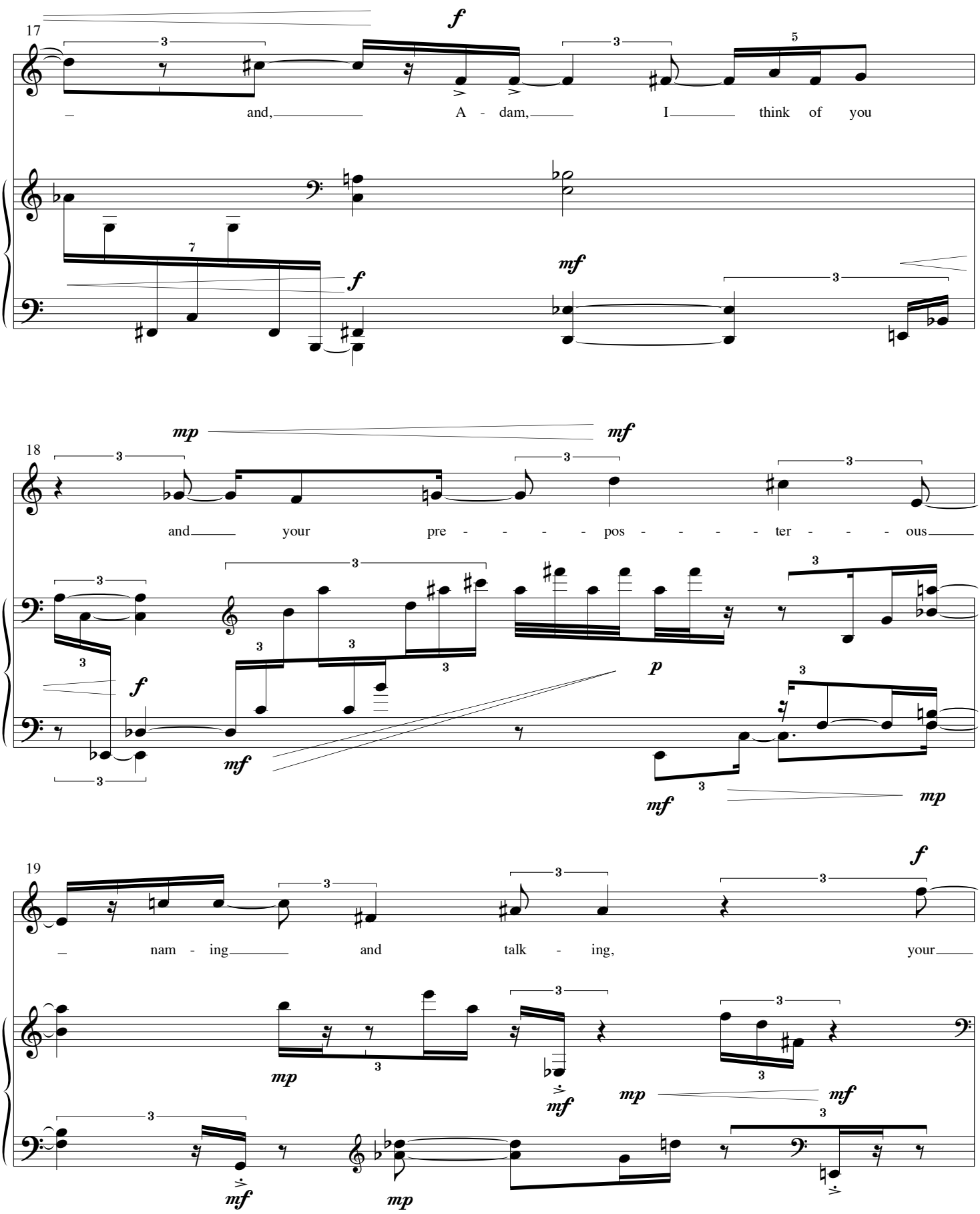
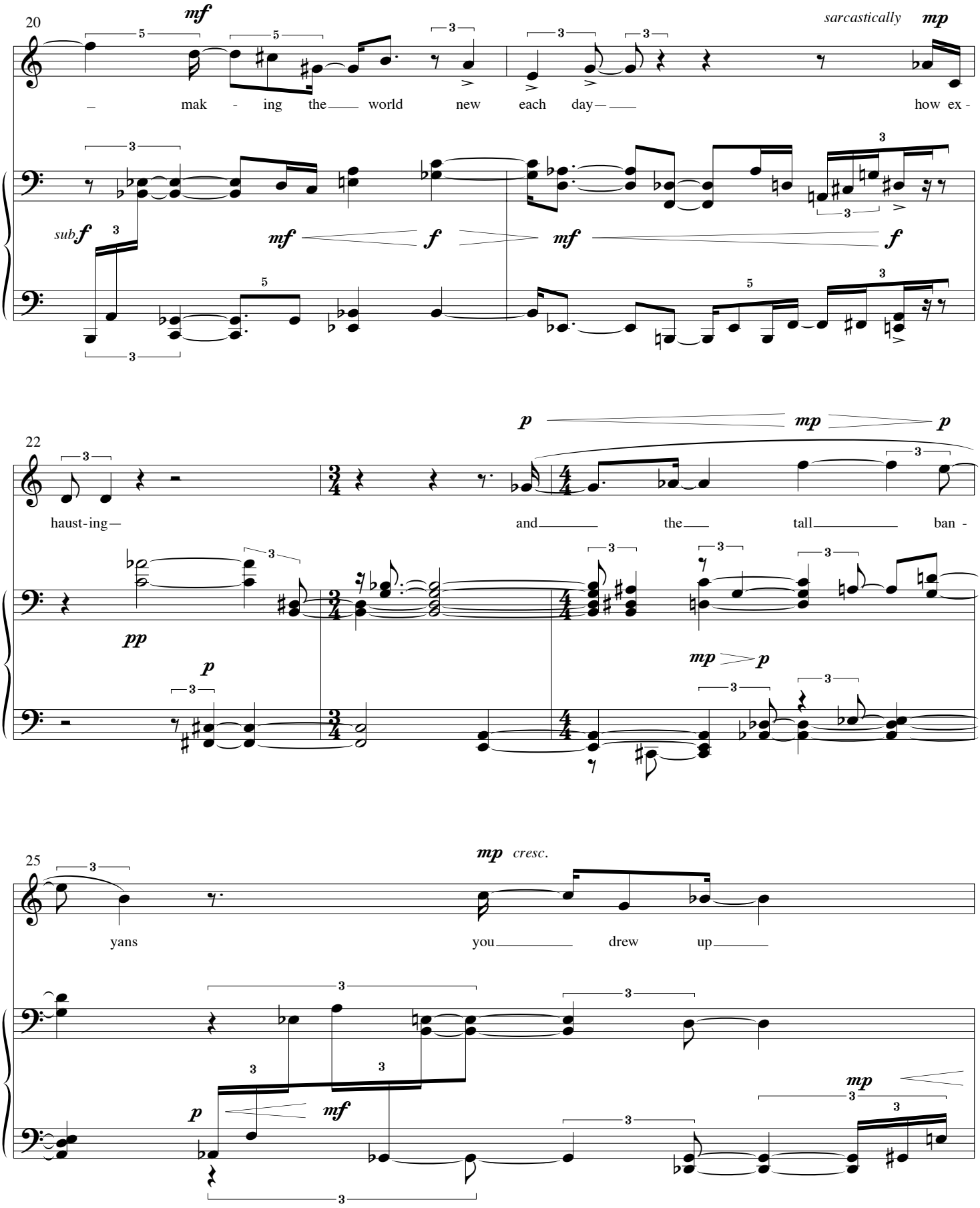
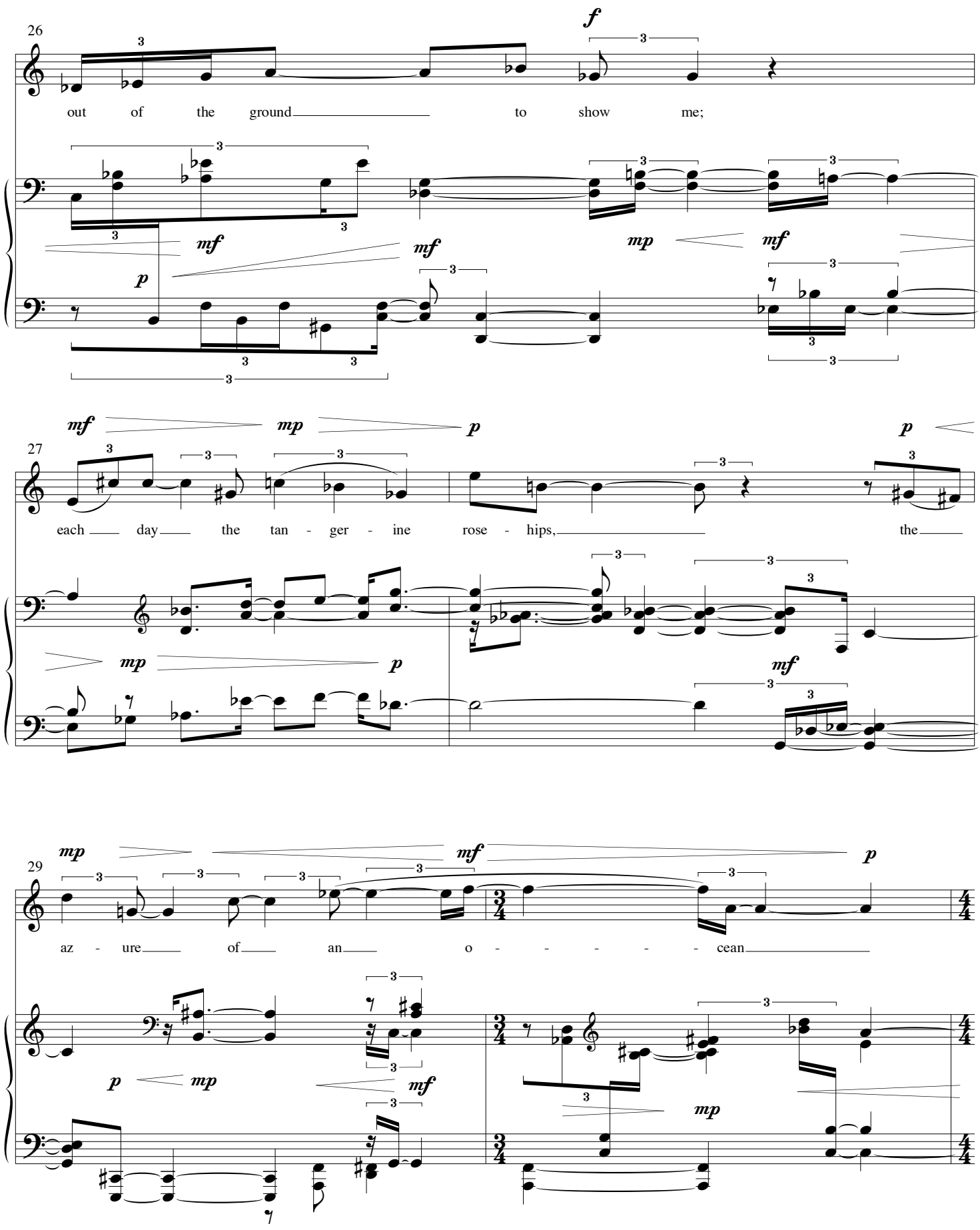
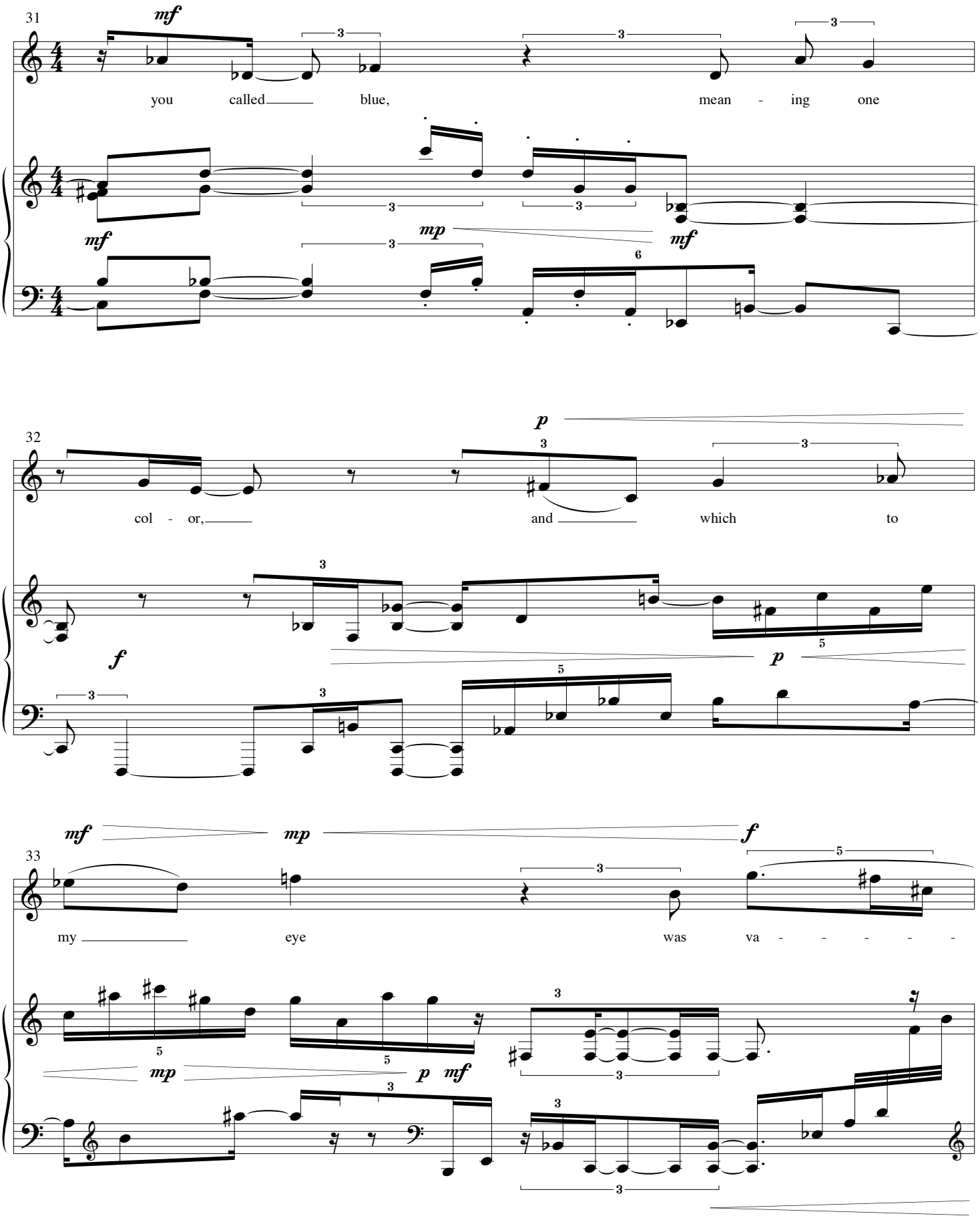
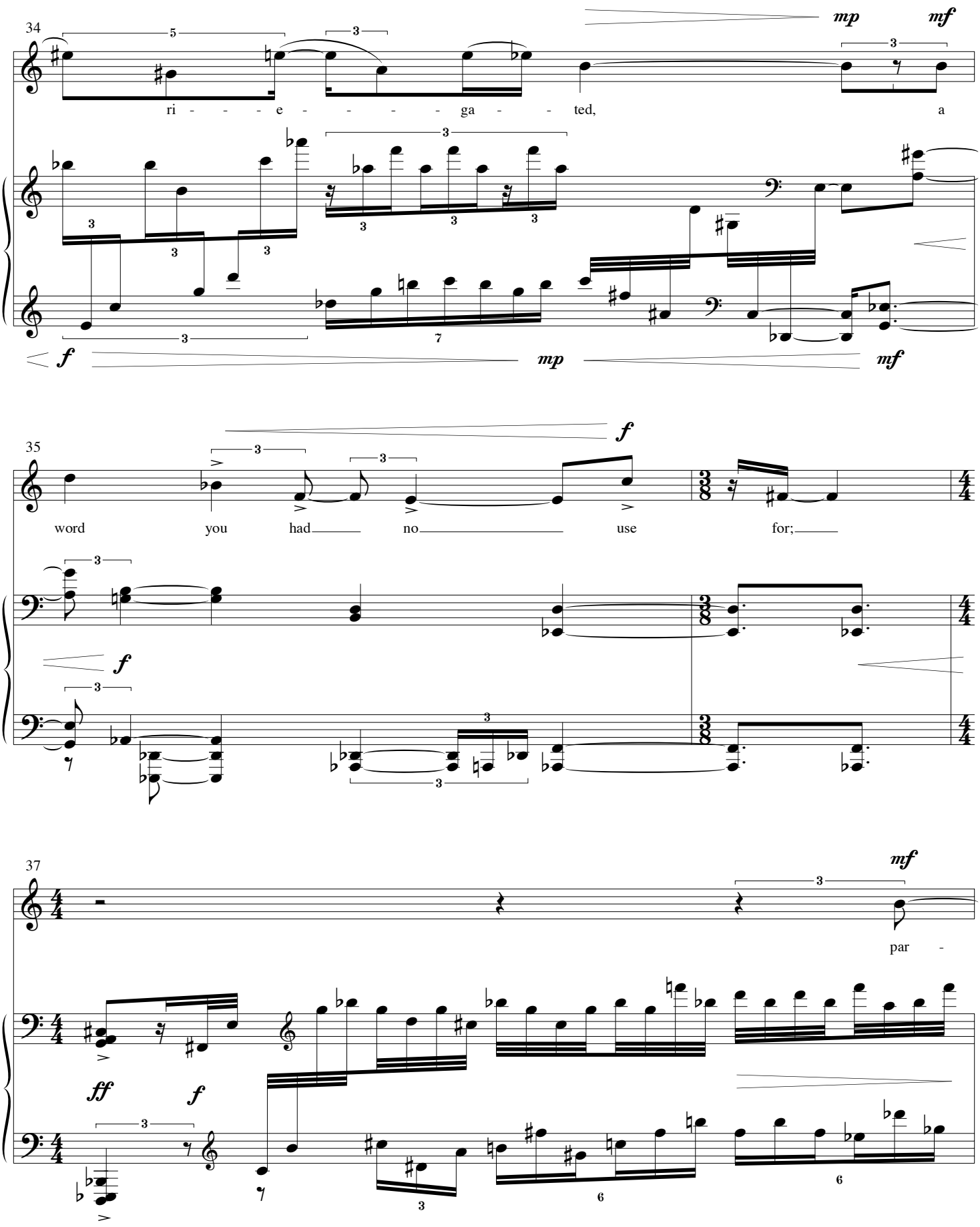

11
pp
p
p
uh…
umm…
mmm…
mp
p
14
mp
mp
mf
cresc.
uh…
uh…
ah…
ah…
p
mp > p
mp
cresc.
16
mf
mp
I
sit
in
this
sum - mer
house
f
mp

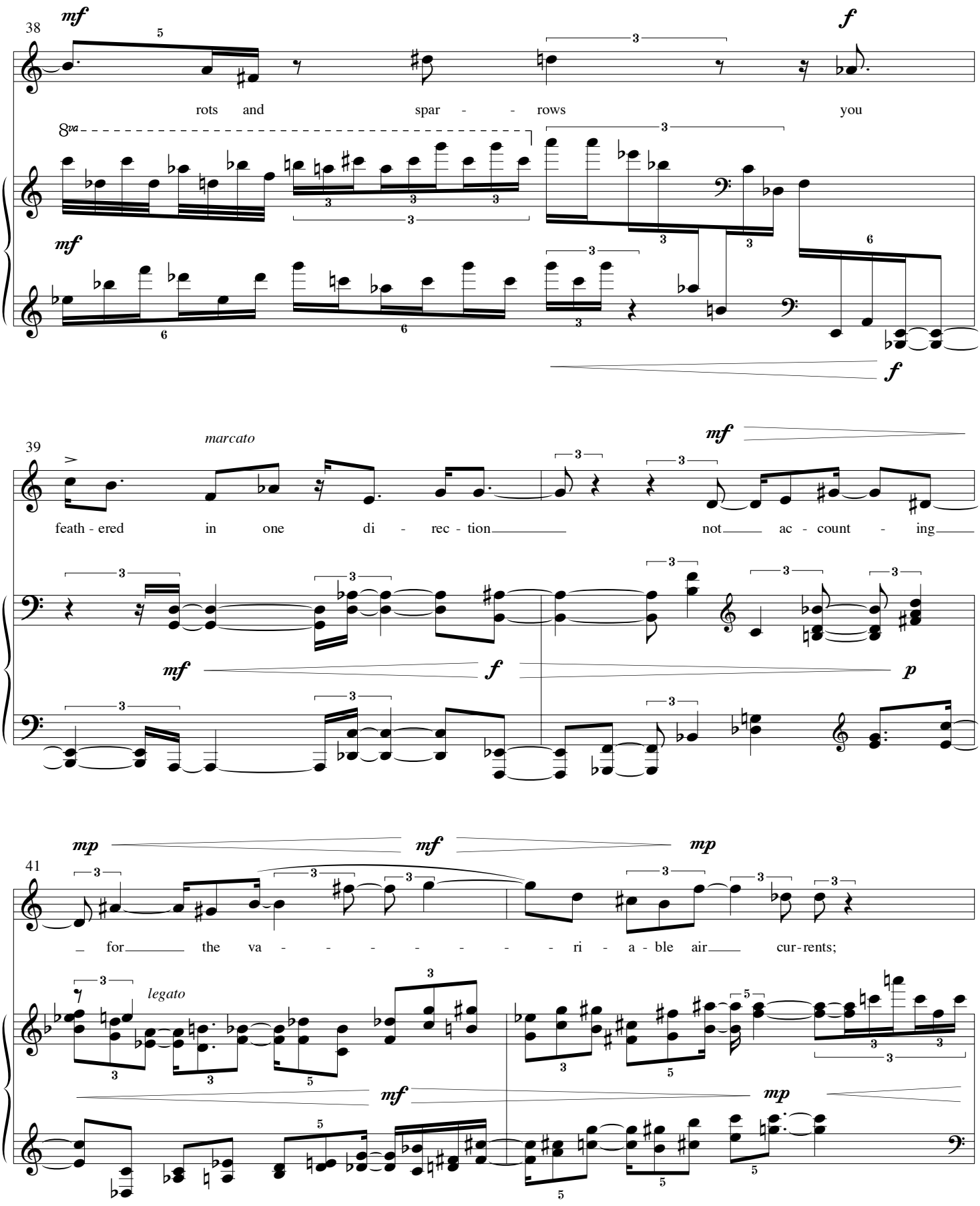

17
f
and, A - dam, I think of you
mf
18
mp
mf
and your pre - - - - pos - - - - ter - - - - ous
p
19
f
nam - ing and talk - ing, your

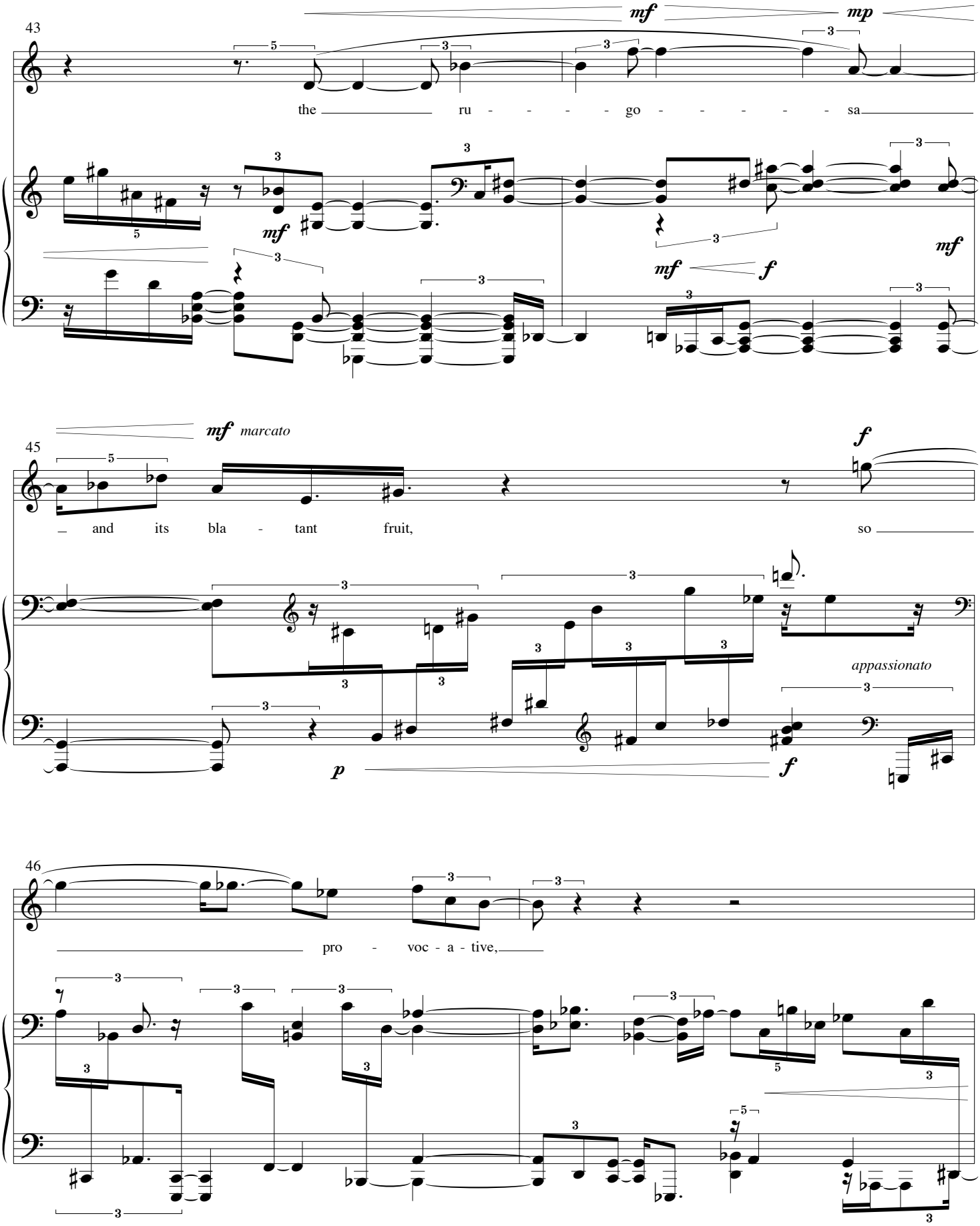

20
mf
sarcastically
mp
– mak - ing the world new each day – how ex -
sub f
mf
f
mf
f
22
p
mp
p
haust-ing – and the tall ban -
pp
p
mp
p
25
mp cresc.
yans you drew up
p
mf
mp

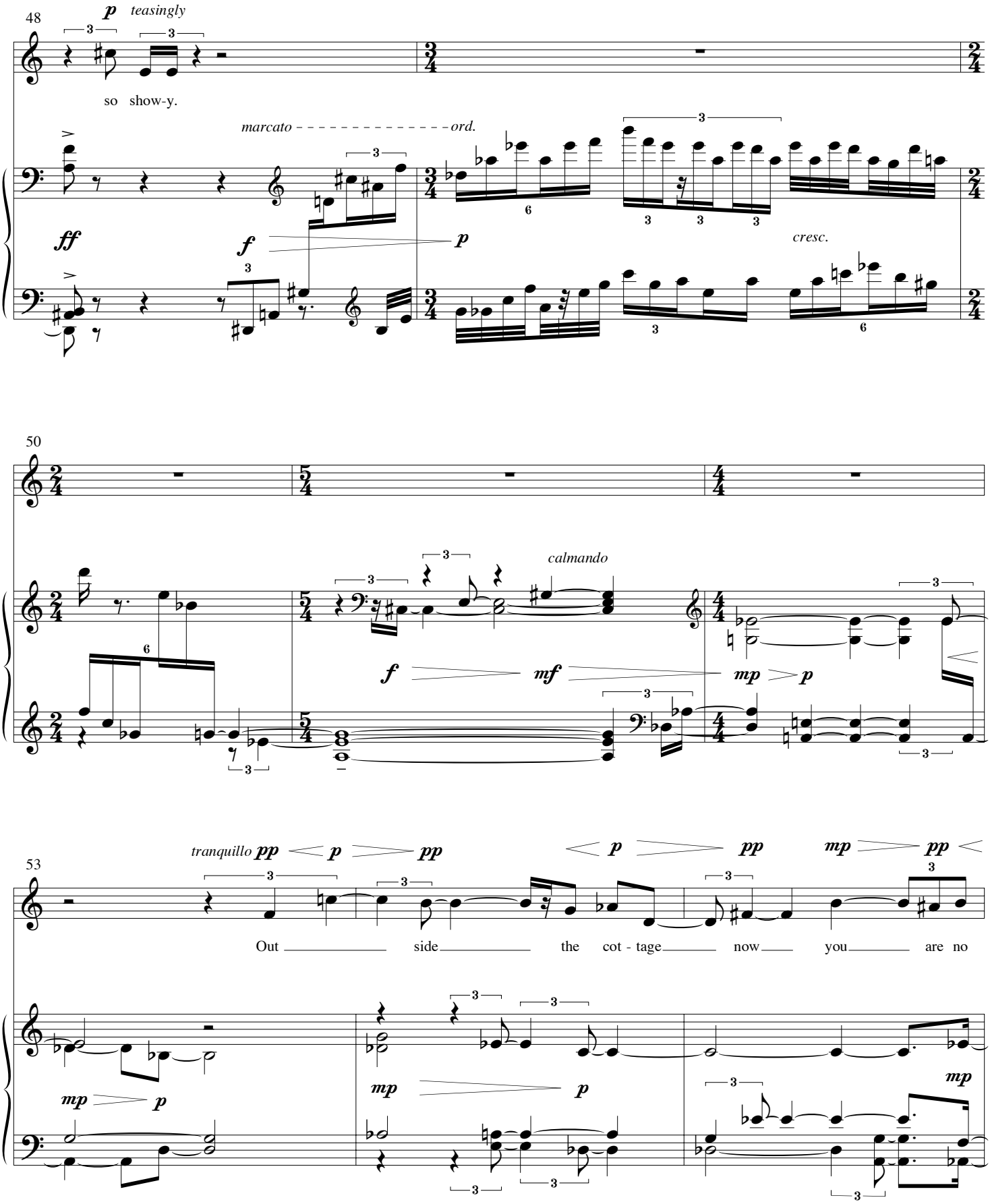

26
f
out of the ground to show me;
mf
mf
p
mp
mf
27
mf
mp
p
p
each day the tan - ger - ine rose - hips, the
mp
p
mf
29
mp
mf
p
az - ure of an o - - - - - cean
p
mp
mf
mp

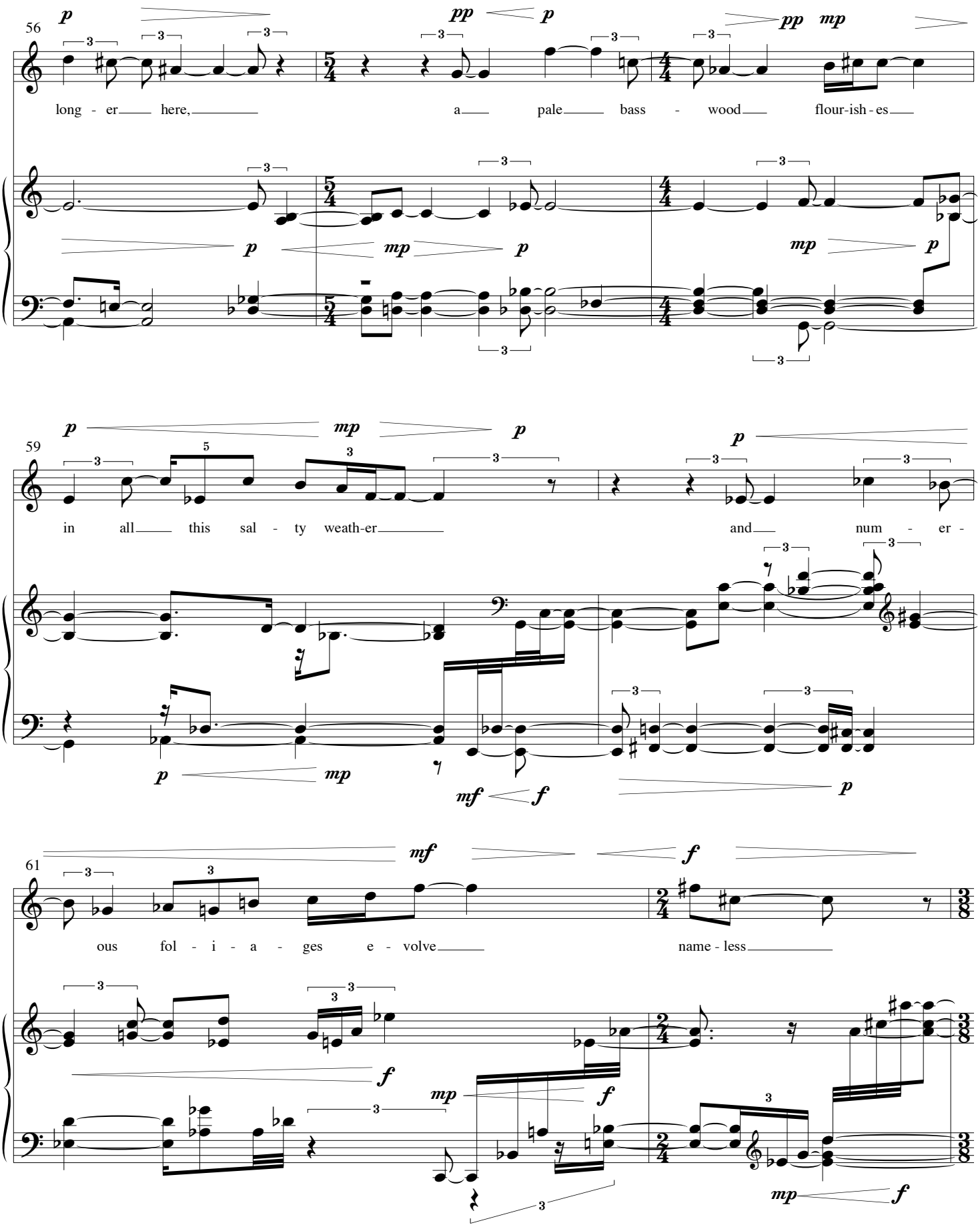

31
mf
you called blue, mean - ing one
mf
mp
mf
32
p
col - or, and which to
f
p
mf
mp
f
33
my eye was va - - - - -
mp
p
mf

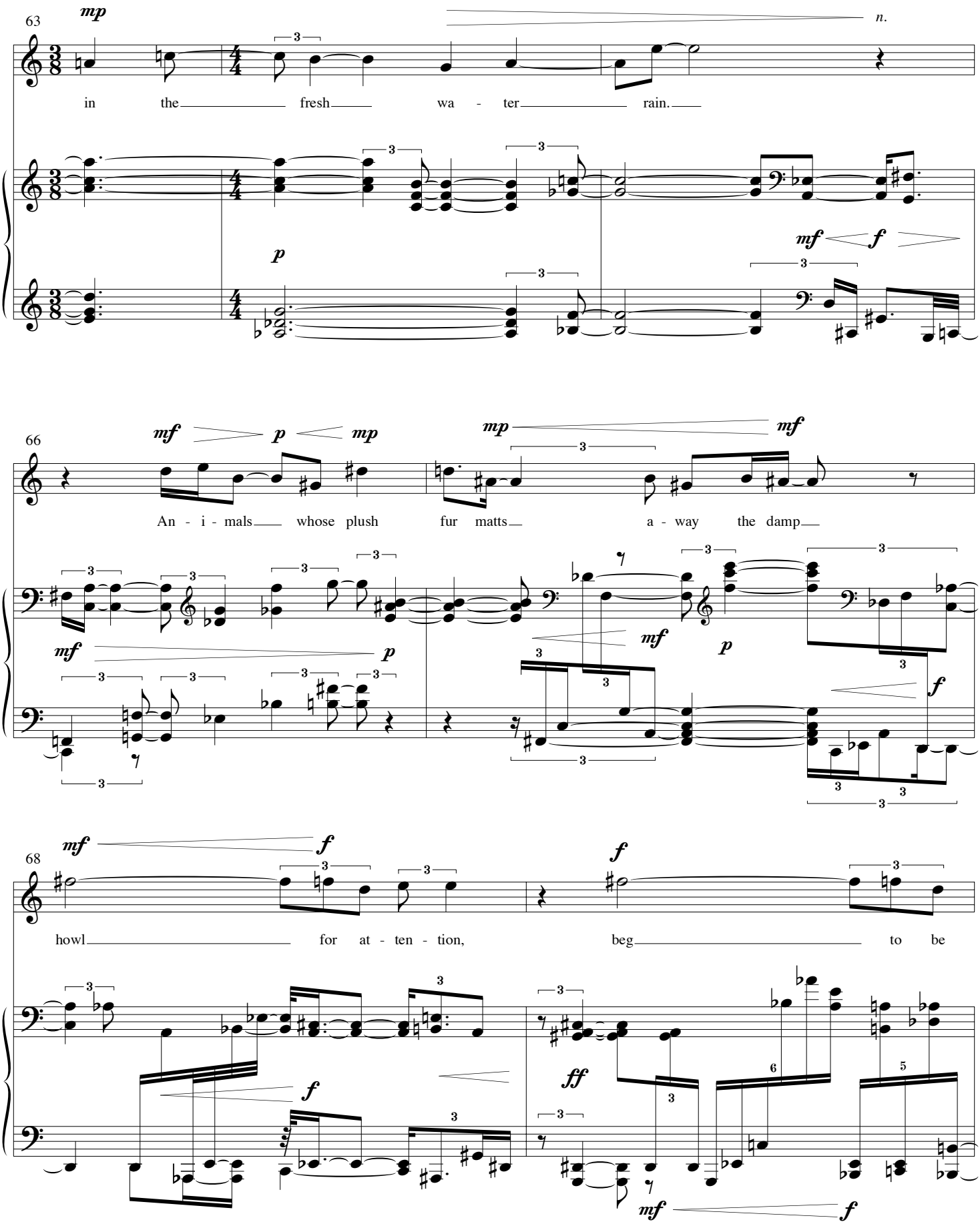

34
mp
mf
ri - - - - e - - - - - ga - - ted, a
f
mp
mf
35
f
word you had no use for;
f
37
mf
par -
ff
f
6
6

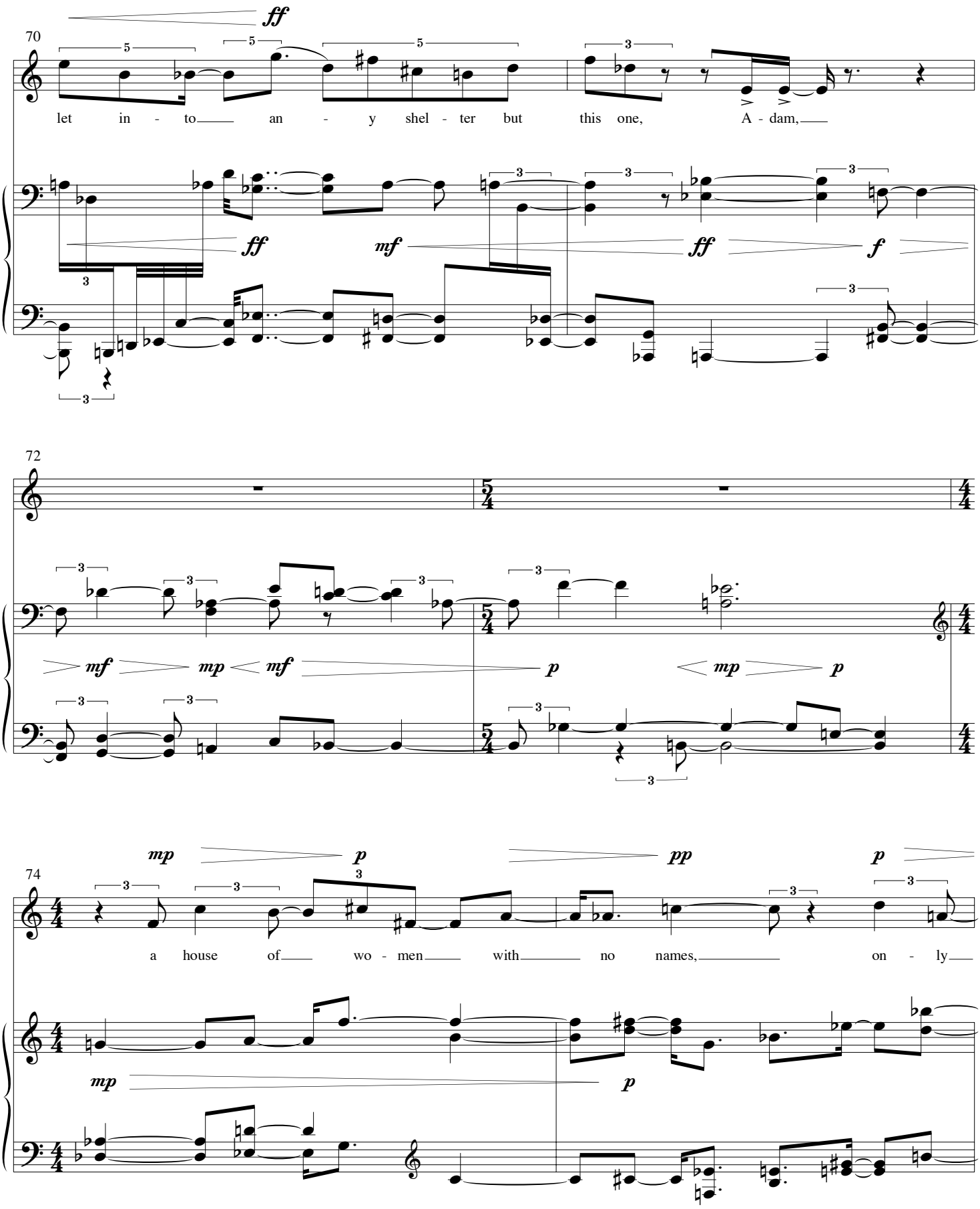

38
mf
f
rots and spar - - rows you
8va
mf
f
39
marcato
mf
feath - ered in one di - rec - tion not ac - count - ing
mf
f
p
41
mp
mf
mp
for the va - - - - - - - - ri - a - ble air cur - rents;
legato
mf
mp

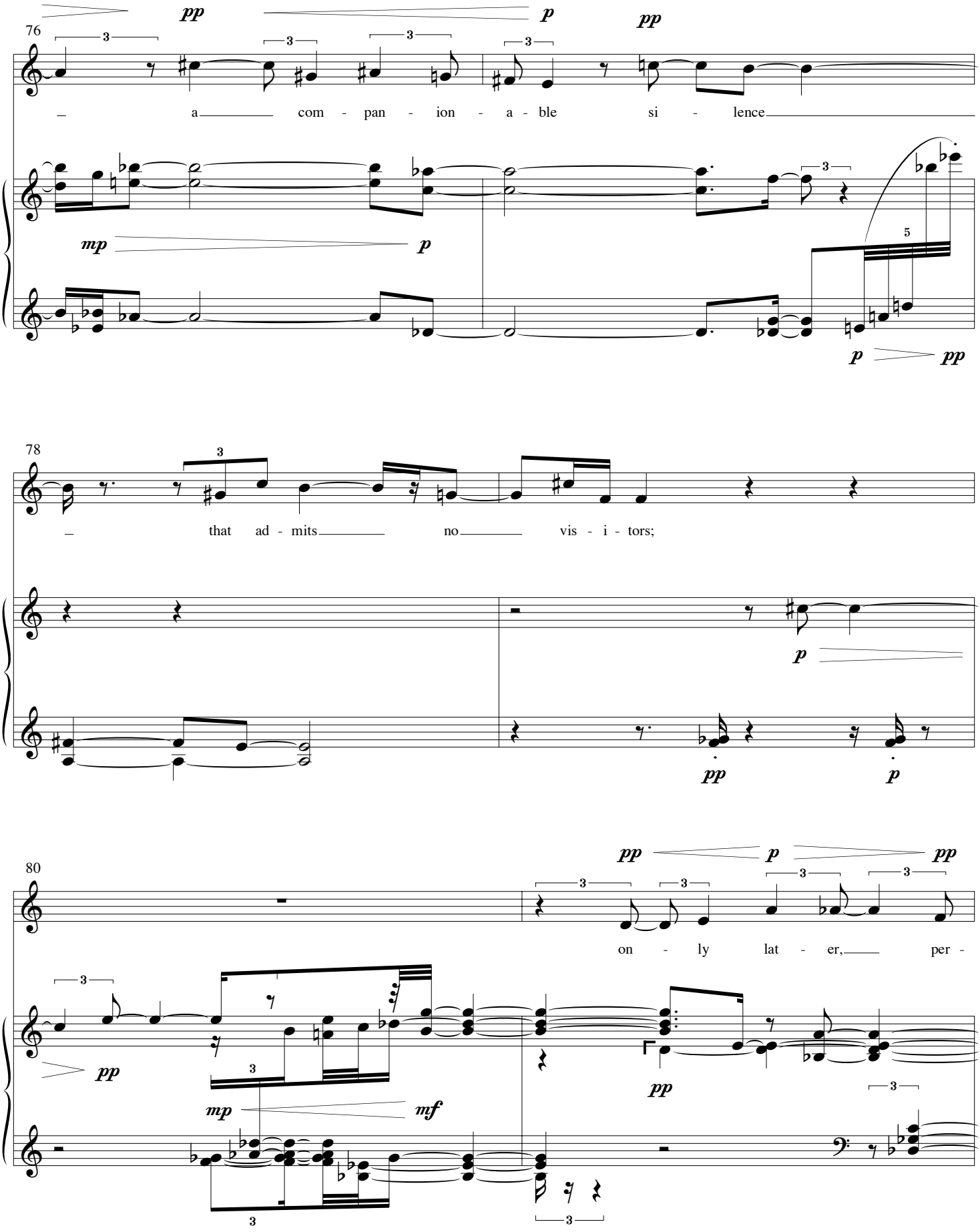

43
mf
mp
the ru - - - - go - - - - - sa
mf
mf
f
mf
45
mf marcato
f
and its bla - tant fruit, so
appassionato
p
f
46
pro - voc - a - tive,

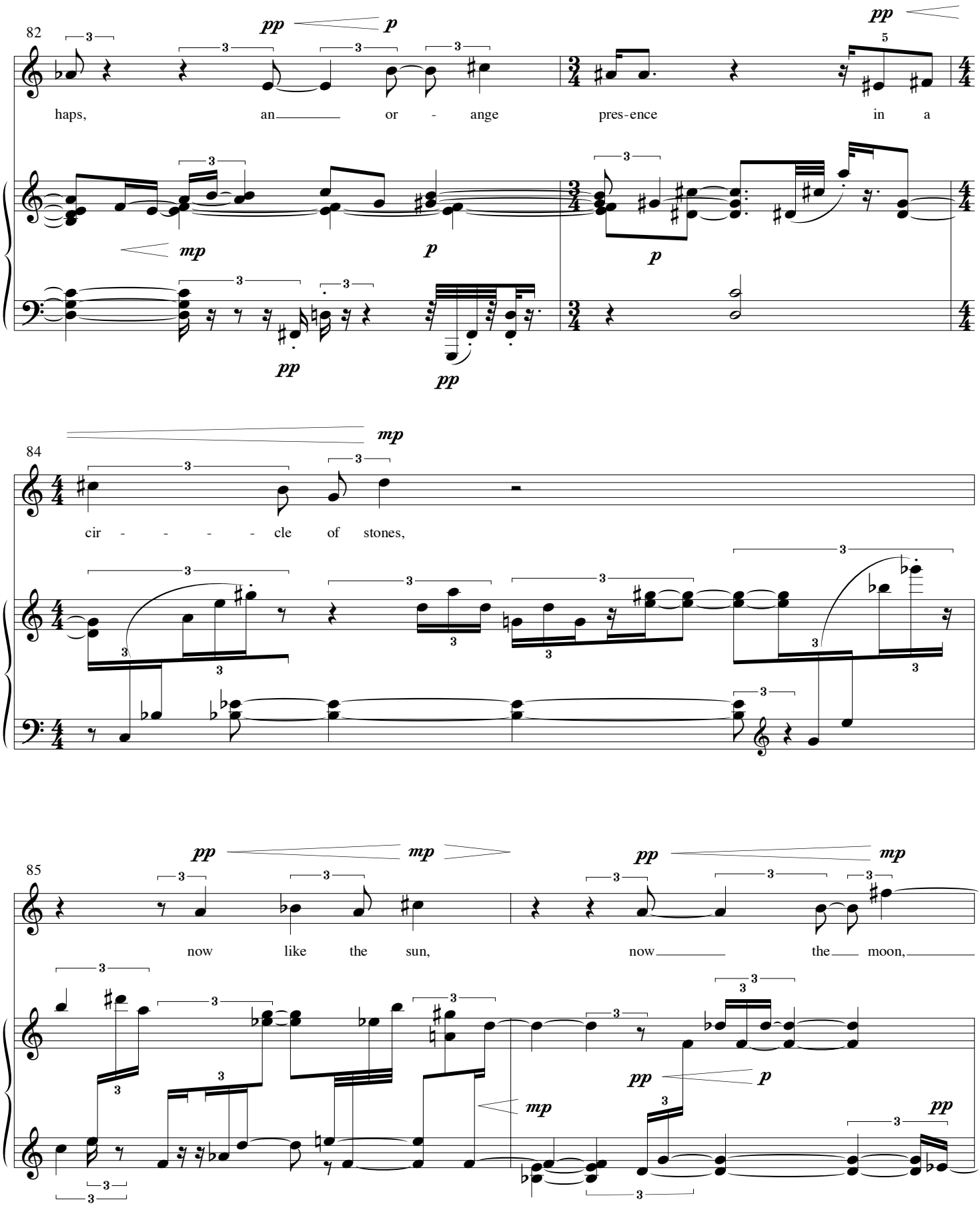

48
p
teasingly
so show-y.
marcato
ord.
ff
f
p
cresc.
50
calmando
f
mf
mp
p
53
tranquillo
pp
p
pp
p
pp
mp
pp
Out side the cot - tage now you are no
mp
p
mp
p
mp

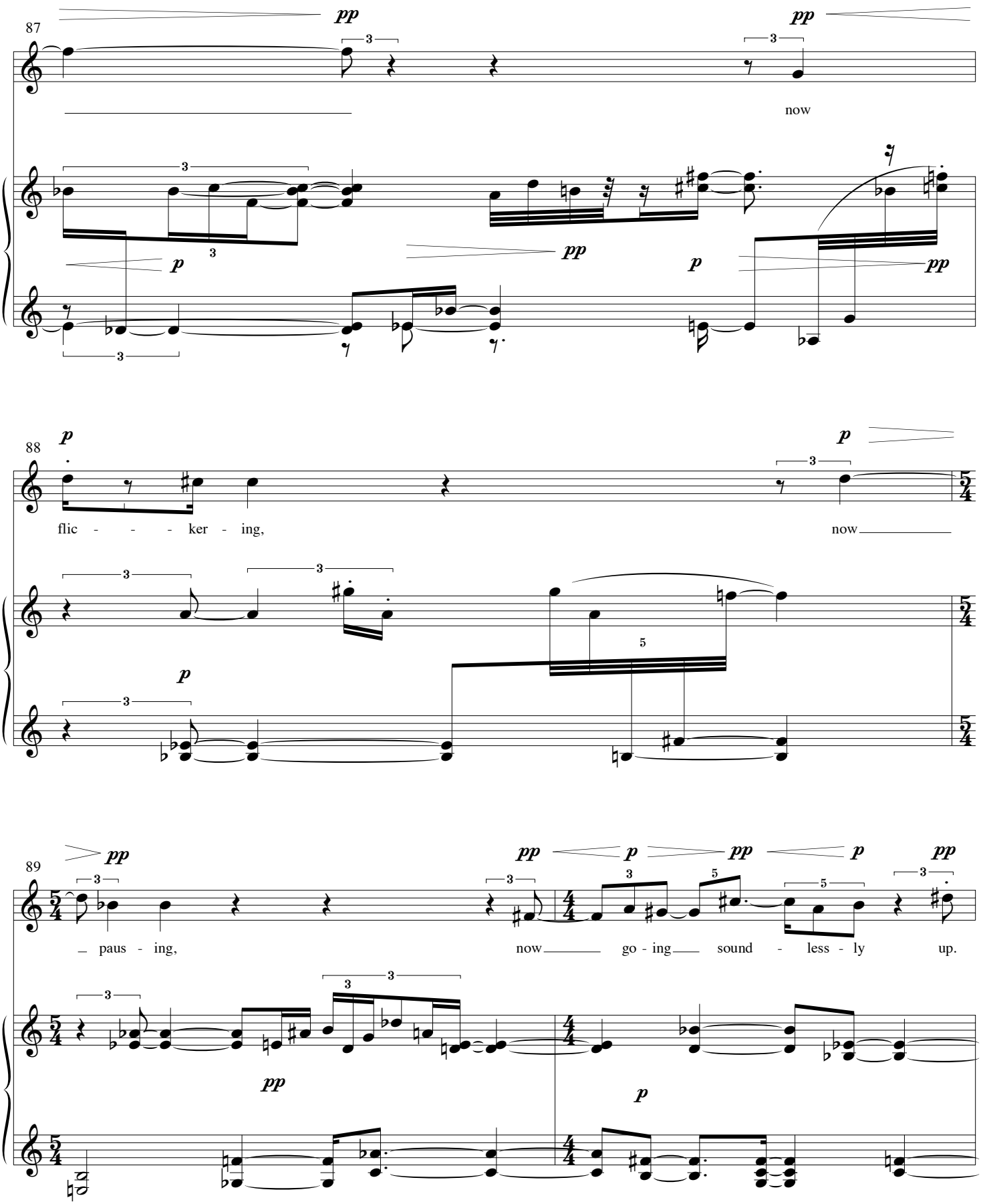

56
p
pp
p
pp
mp
long - er here,
a pale bass - wood flour-ish - es
p
mp
p
mp
p
59
p
mp
p
p
in all this sal - ty weath-er
and num - er -
p
mp
mf
f
p
61
mf
f
ous fol - i - a - ges e - volve
name - less
f
mp
f
mp
f

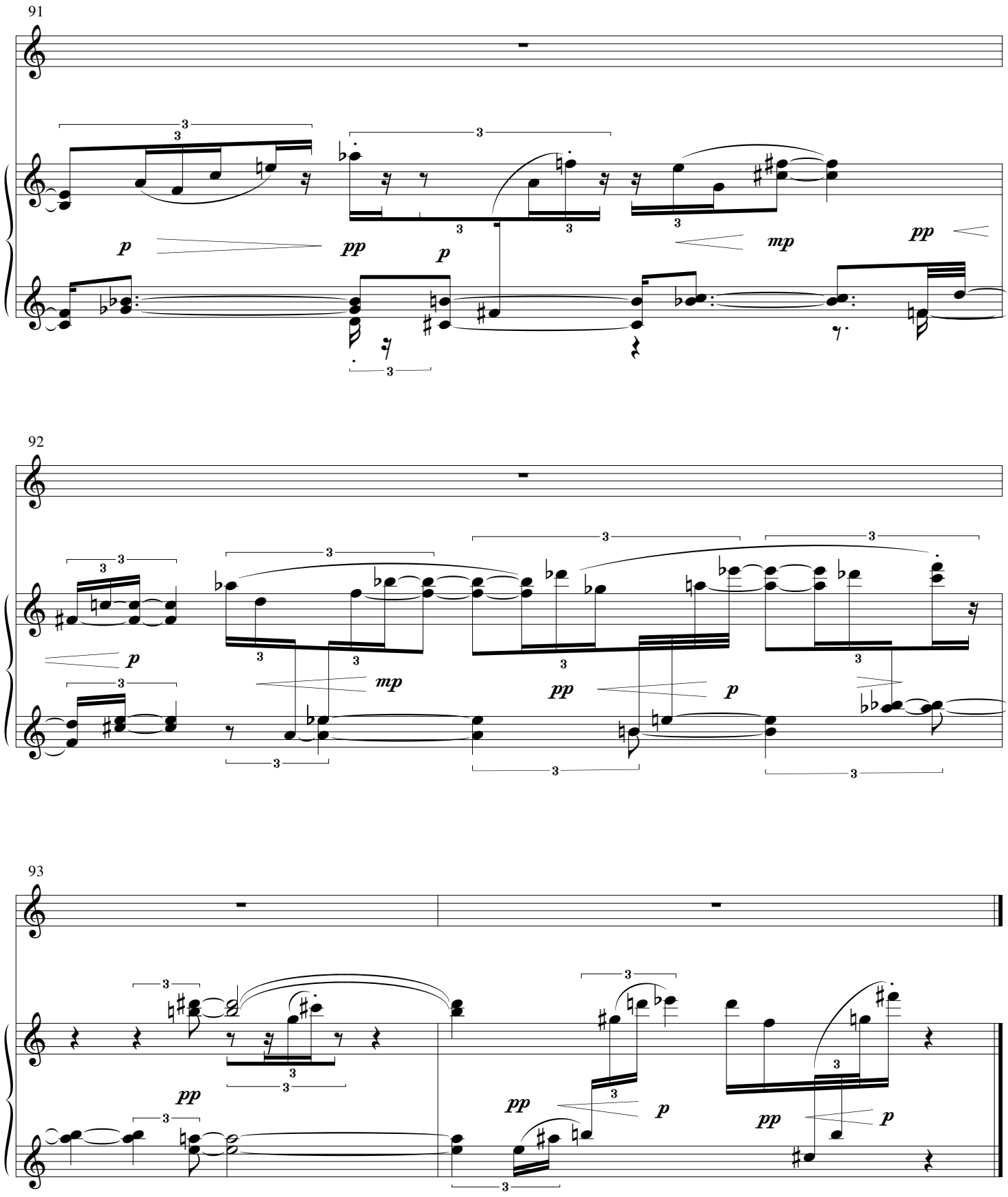

63
mp
n.
in the fresh wa - ter rain.
p
mf f
66
mf p mp
mp mf
An - i - mals whose plush fur matts a - way the damp
mf p
mf p
f
68
mf f
f
howl for at - ten - tion, beg to be
f
ff
mf f


70
ff
let in - to an - y shel - ter but this one, A - dam,
ff
mf
ff
f
72
mf
mp
mf
p
mp
p
74
mp
p
pp
p
a house of wo - men with no names, on - ly
mp
p


76
pp
p
pp
a com - pan - ion - a - ble si - lence
mp
p
p
pp
78
that ad - mits no vis - i - tors;
p
pp
p
80
pp
p
pp
on - ly lat - er, per -
pp
mp
mf
pp


82
pp
p
pp
haps, an or - ange pres-ence in a
mp
p
p
pp
pp
84
mp
cir - - - - cle of stones,
85
pp
mp
pp
mp
now like the sun, now the moon,
mp
pp
p
pp


87
pp
pp
now
p
pp
p
pp
88
p
p
flic - - - ker - ing,
now
89
pp
pp
p
pp
p
pp
paus - ing,
now
go - ing
sound - less - ly
up.
pp
p



New York — 4 May 1993