SEA-069-00 $7.00

I'll Tell You a Story, then...

Nancy White

low voice and piano

Elizabeth Alexander

Seafarer Press
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Just Once I Want To Write a Gentle Thing

***(Song Title: "I'll Tell You a Story, then..."*)**

Nancy White

I'll tell you a story, then,
of how as I was walking, I smelled something sugary,
elusive, spicy, you could call it,
and smoky in a sad sort of way. Also
like blossom barely born, pale and half-undone
to the wind that still might even be carrying snow,
this scent I decided to follow.
Sometimes I stumbled on the path, silver
with stones worn smooth as kindness,
or had to stop and rest among pines
where the smell settled a little, at home
with their religious and sensuous twang. Other times,
I moved fast, snatching at its mulchy sweet threads
through the air, the leaf and rotten-meat ribbons of scent,
rough tongues of tigers who have recently feasted, the living decay
of happiness, and saddle soap, the lemon urgency of sex,
honey of the air — where did it come from?
I rose panting up the slope, muscles strung on the searching
bow of my body, raised the back of my hand
to wipe away the sweat
salting my lips
and realized the smell —
the smell is me.

From "Sun, Moon, Salt," published by The Word Works
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Notes: "I'll Tell You a Story, then..." was composed in October 2005 for Ruth MacKenzie, using a collaborative process which married her strong folk-influenced singing style with my own background writing art songs. As in the classical tradition, the poem itself shapes the formal and emotional structure of the music, and the rich harmonic palette grows directly out of the meaning of the words. However, the gestures, inflections and melodic nuances in the vocal line are deeply rooted in popular singing styles, and the use of a microphone takes full advantage of the intimacy of Ruth MacKenzie's expressive voice and Nancy White's earthy poem.

for Ruth MacKenzie

I'll Tell You a Story, then...

for low voice and piano

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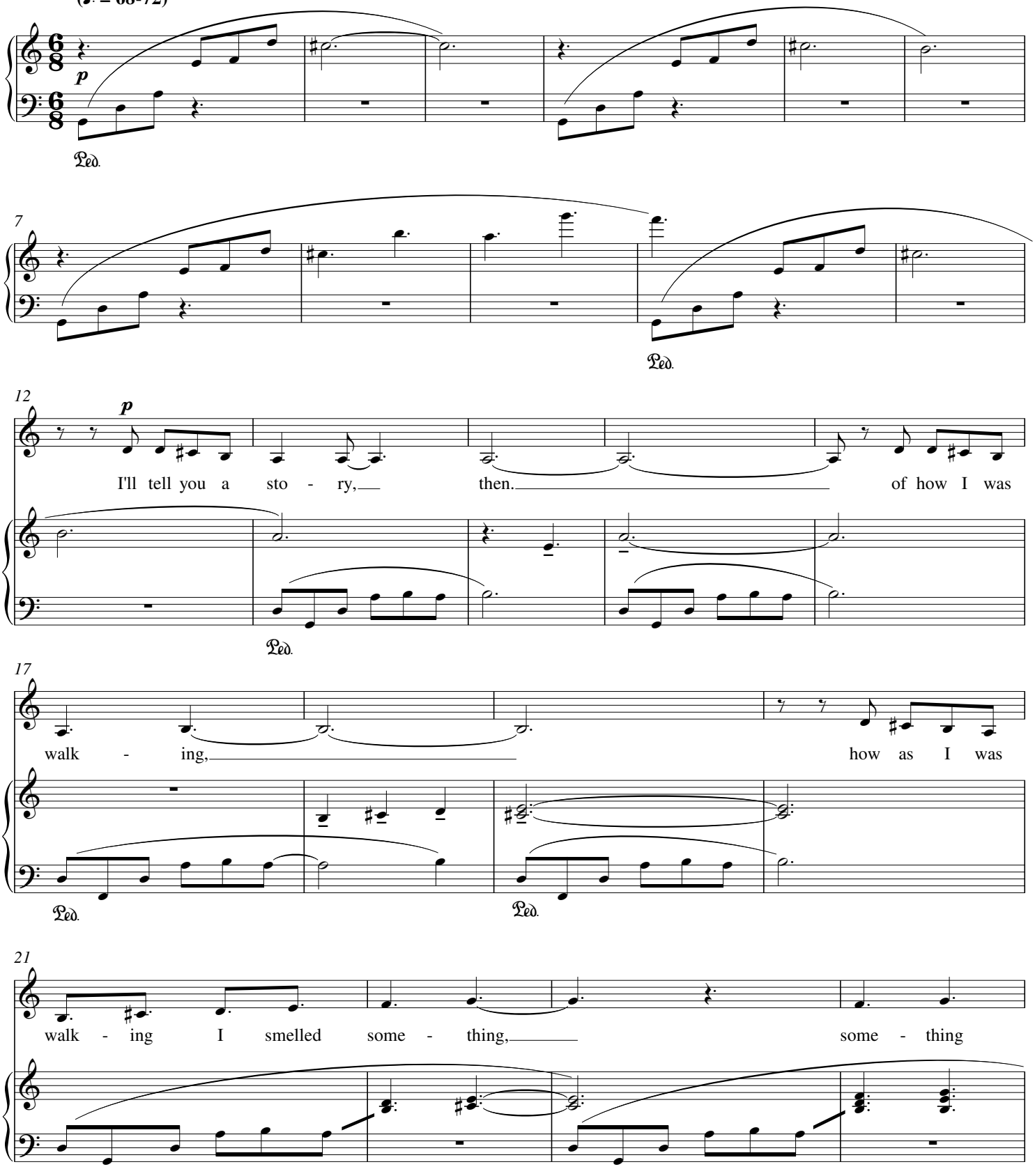
(♩. = 68-72)



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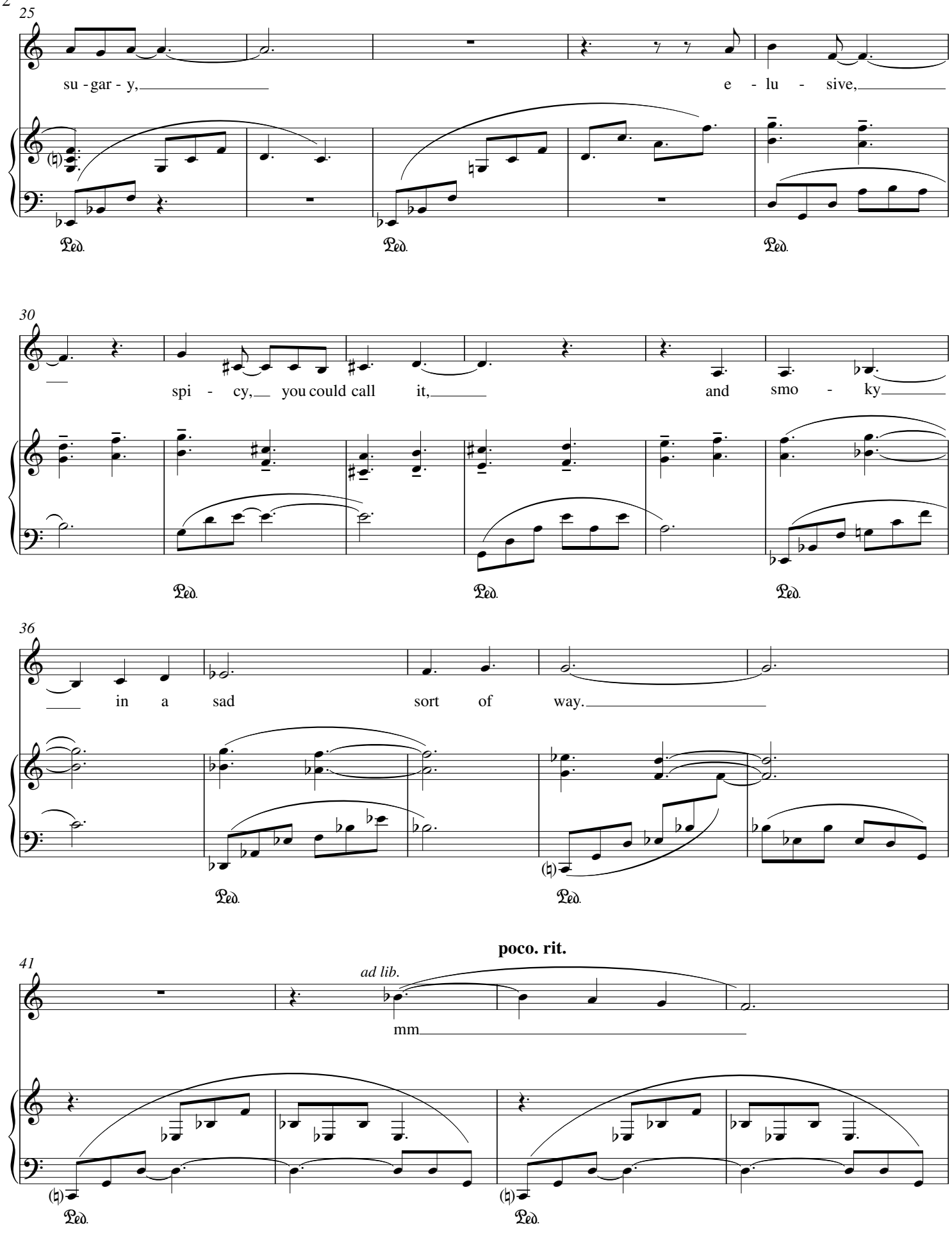
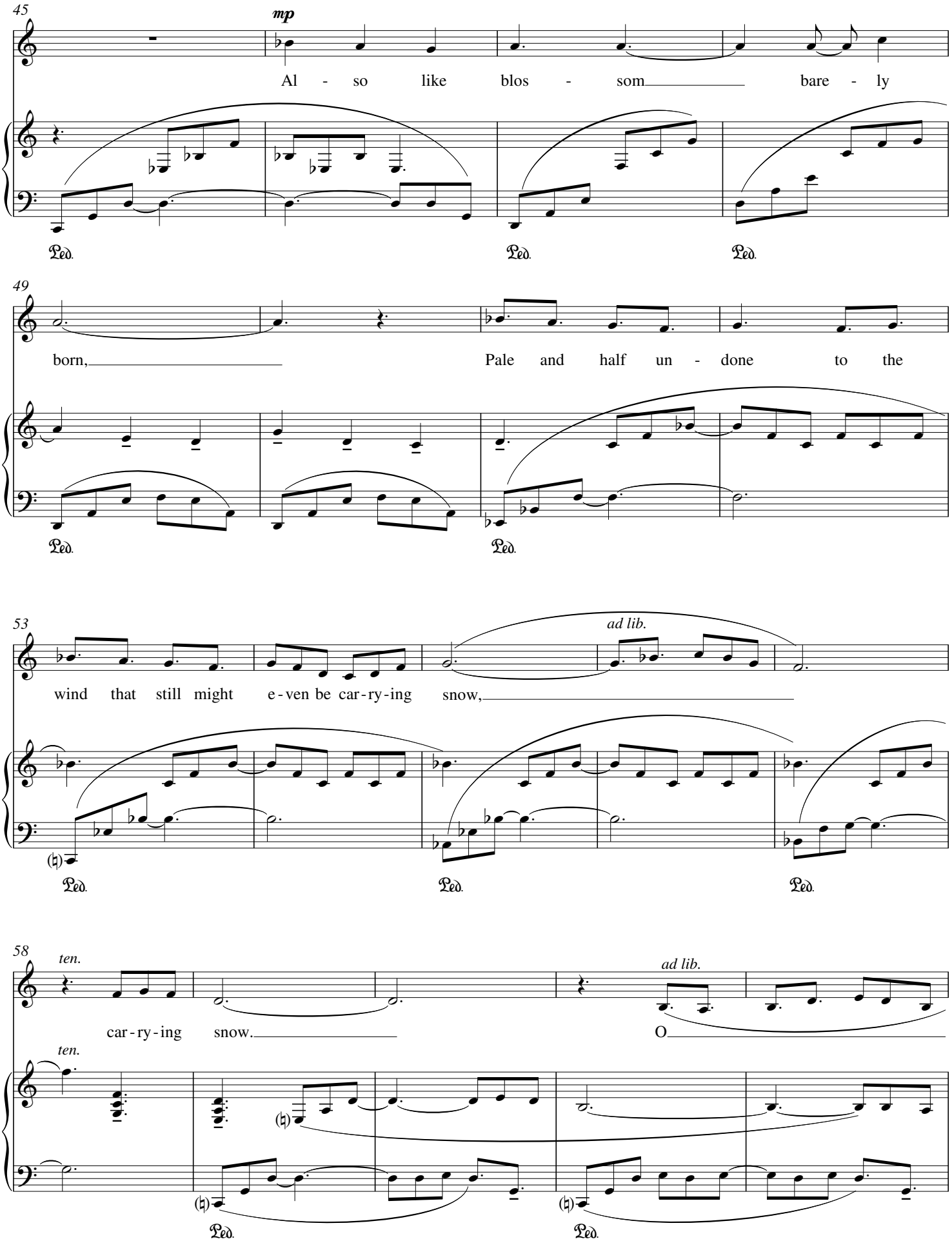
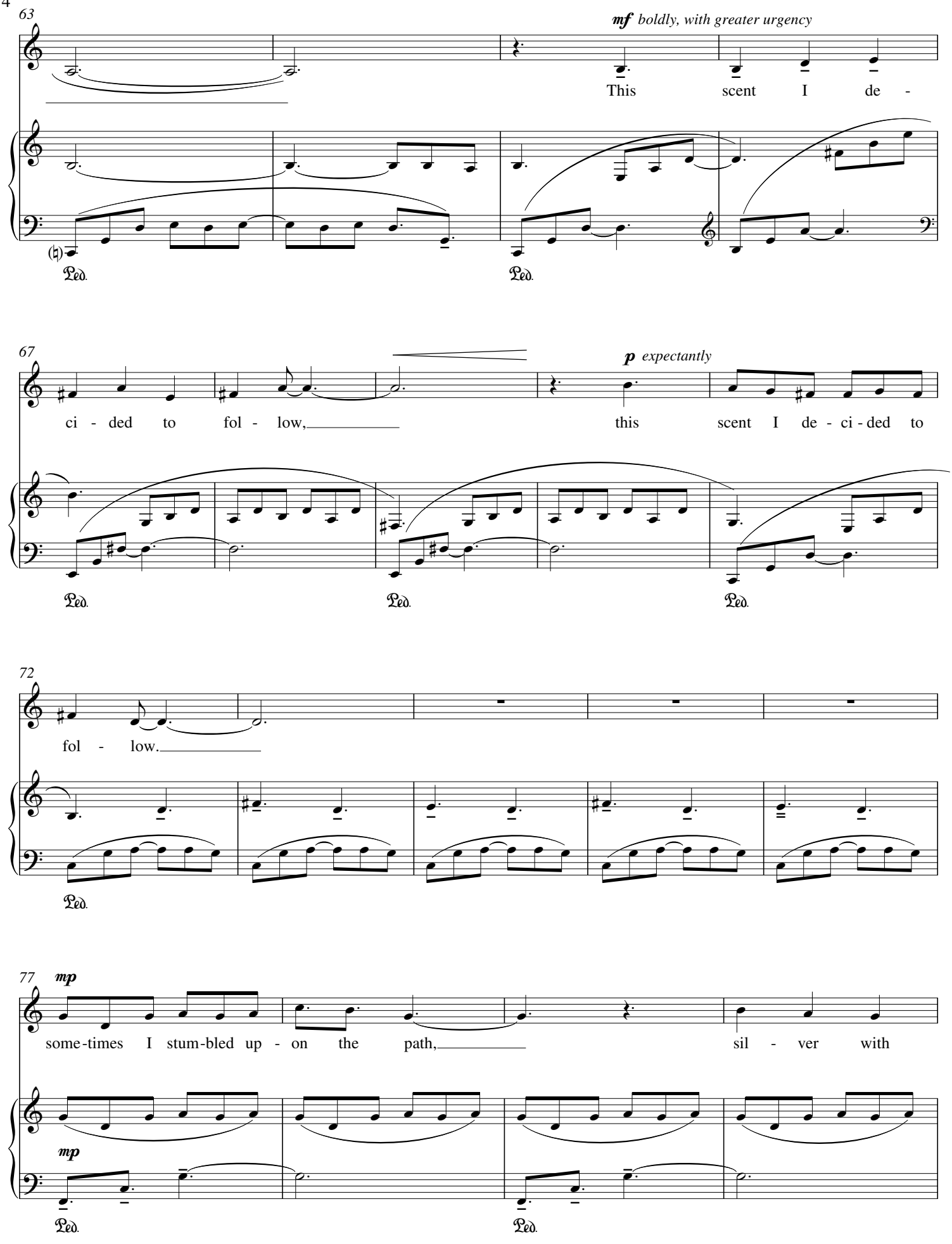

25
su - gar - y,
e - lu - sive,
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
30
spi - cy, you could call it,
and smo - ky
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
36
in a sad sort of way.
Ped.
Ped.
poco. rit.
41
ad lib.
mm
Ped.
Ped.


45
mp
Al - so like blos - som bare - ly
Ped. Ped. Ped.
49
born, Pale and half un - done to the
Ped. Ped.
53
ad lib.
wind that still might e - ven be car - ry - ing snow,
Ped. Ped. Ped.
58
ten.
ad lib.
car - ry - ing snow. O
ten.
Ped. Ped.


63
mf boldly, with greater urgency
This scent I de -
Ped.
Ped.
67
p expectantly
ci - ded to fol - low,
this scent I de - ci - ded to
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
72
fol - low.
Ped.
77
mp
some-times I stum-bled up - on the path,
sil - ver with
mp
Ped.
Ped.

A LOT OF HARD WORK & CREATIVITY WENT INTO BRINGING THIS MUSIC TO YOU...

...AND SOME OF IT WAS EVEN MINE.

THIS PAGE HAS BEEN INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

(YOU KNOW WHY.)

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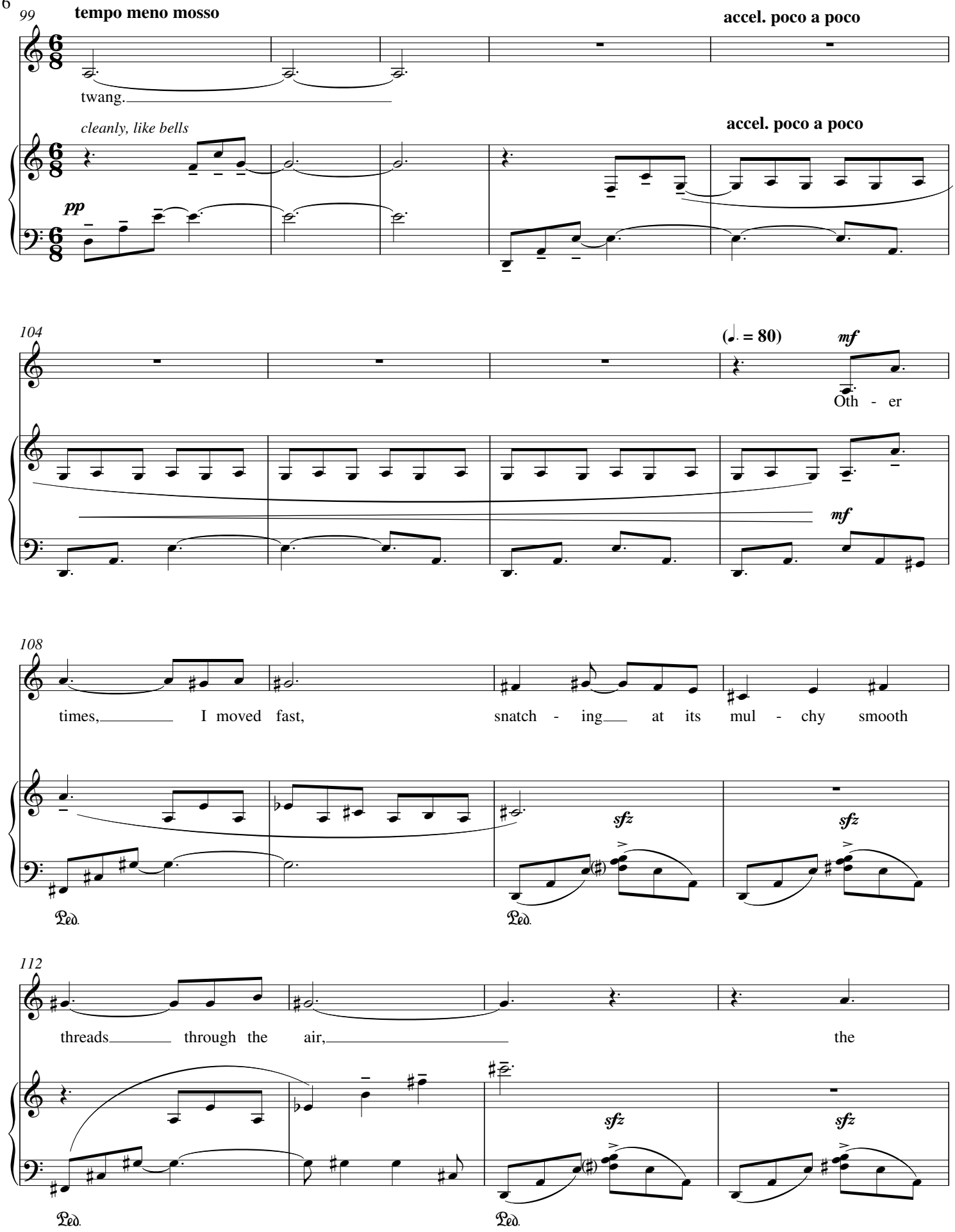
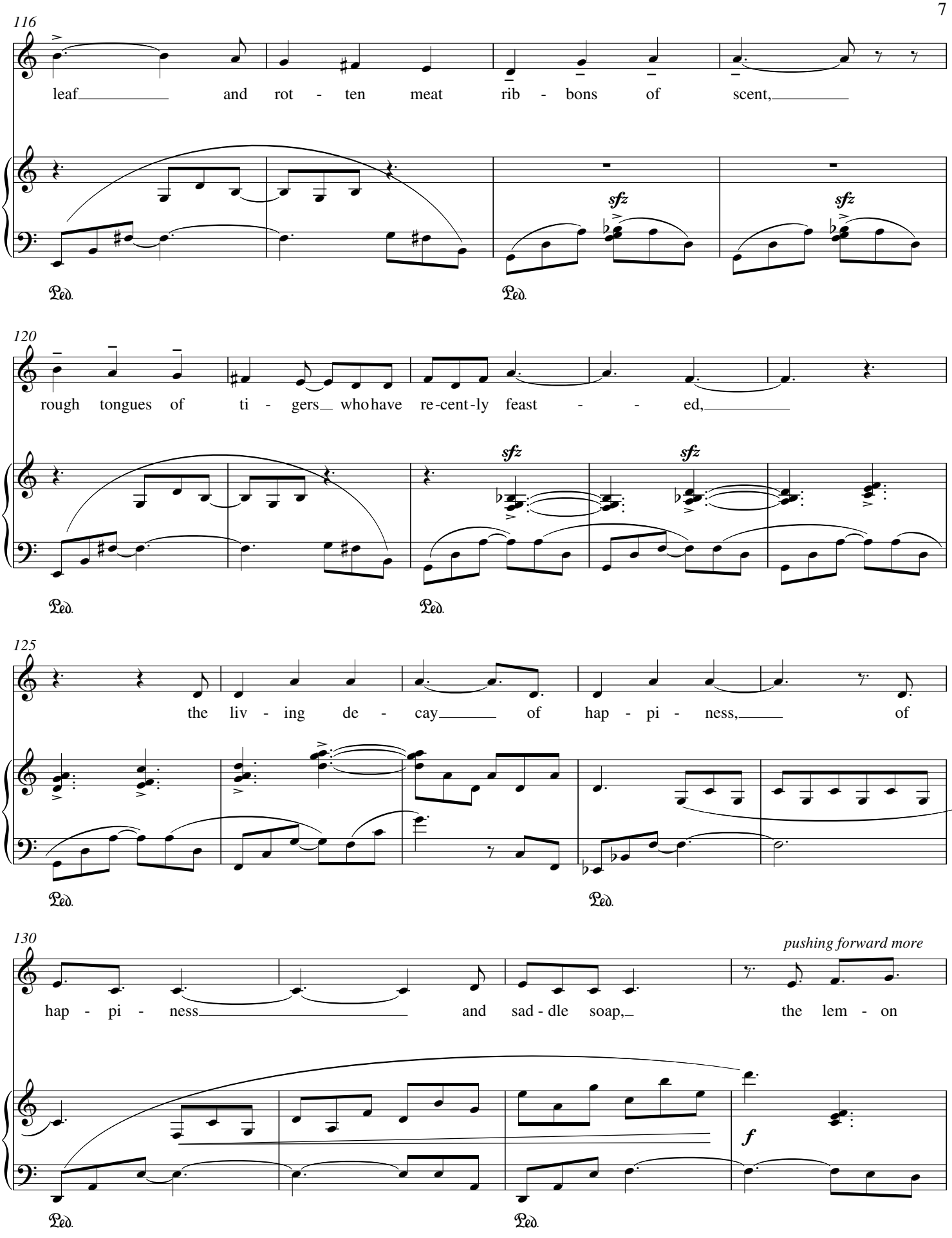

99
tempo meno mosso
accel. poco a poco
twang.
cleanly, like bells
accel. poco a poco
pp
104
(♩. = 80)
mf
Oth - er
mf
108
times, I moved fast, snatch - ing at its mul - chy smooth
sfz
sfz
Ped.
Ped.
112
threads through the air, the
sfz
sfz
Ped.
Ped.


116
leaf and rot - ten meat rib - bons of scent,
sfz
sfz
Ped.
Ped.
120
rough tongues of ti - gers who have re-cent-ly feast - - ed,
sfz
sfz
Ped.
Ped.
125
the liv - ing de - cay of hap - pi - ness, of
Ped.
Ped.
130
pushing forward more
hap - pi - ness and sad - dle soap, the lem - on
f
Ped.
Ped.

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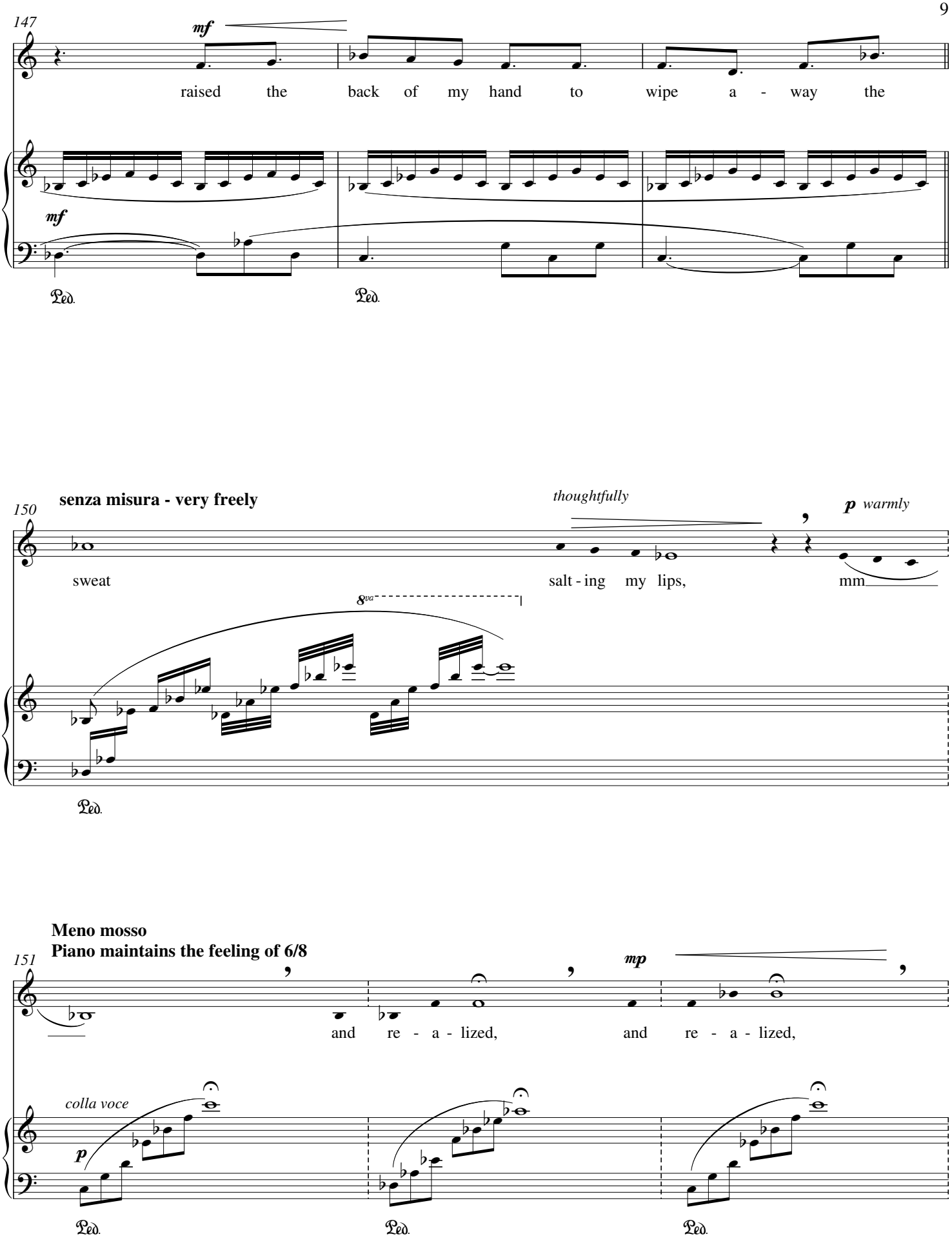
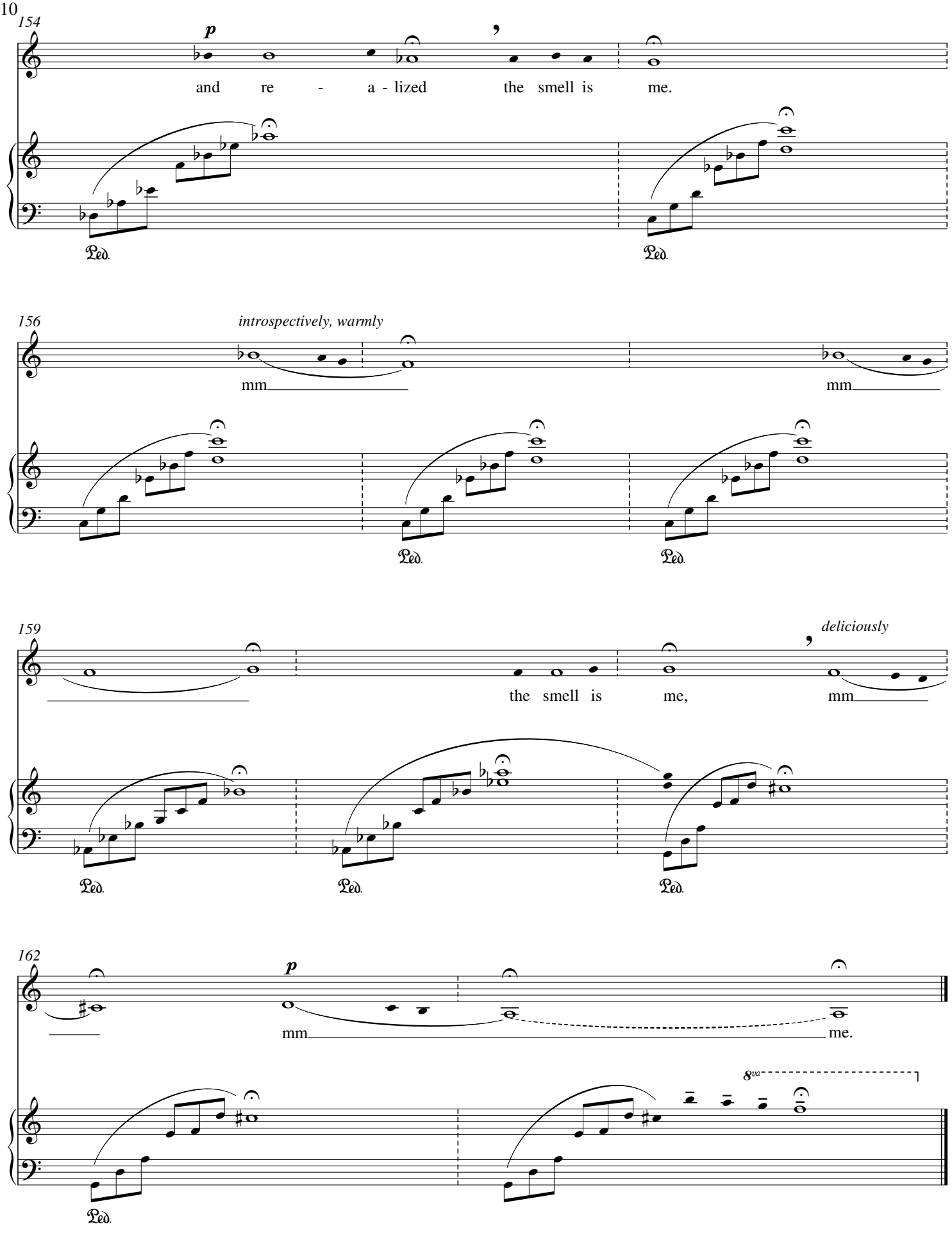

147
mf
raised the back of my hand to wipe a - way the
mf
Ped.
Ped.
150
senza misura - very freely
thoughtfully
p warmly
sweat
salt - ing my lips,
mm
8va
Ped.
151
Meno mosso
Piano maintains the feeling of 6/8
mp
and re - a - lized,
and re - a - lized,
colla voce
p
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.


154
p
and re - a - lized the smell is me.
Ped.
Ped.
156
introspectively, warmly
mm
mm
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
159
deliciously
the smell is me, mm
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
162
p
mm
me.
8va
Ped.