Katharina S. G. Mueller

The First Prayer

for voice and piano

(2022)

Performance Notes

New tempos markings with no preceding accelerando/ritardando should feel abrupt, otherwise one tempo should transform smoothly and organically into the next over the full duration indicated. Similarly, most dynamic changes are buffered by a crescendo/decrescendo and should occur smoothly, and should be read as indicative of the shape of the phrase. For the pianist, the two "Turbulent" sections are opportunities for virtuosic liberties, to be played with vigour. An ambitious tempo for the accelerandos is welcome, though the sudden changes in dynamics and tempo, and the articulation of individual notes, should be prioritized over speed.

Duration ca. 10:00

Program Notes

“The First Prayer” contemplates the essence and origins of love and hatred, and of the idea of a higher power that has been conceived of across geography and cultures. Diatonic harmonies paired with words of comfort and familiarity contrast with more symmetrical harmonic systems, such as whole-tone and hexatonic scales, where chromaticism complicates the melody to reflect the sincere progression of the text.

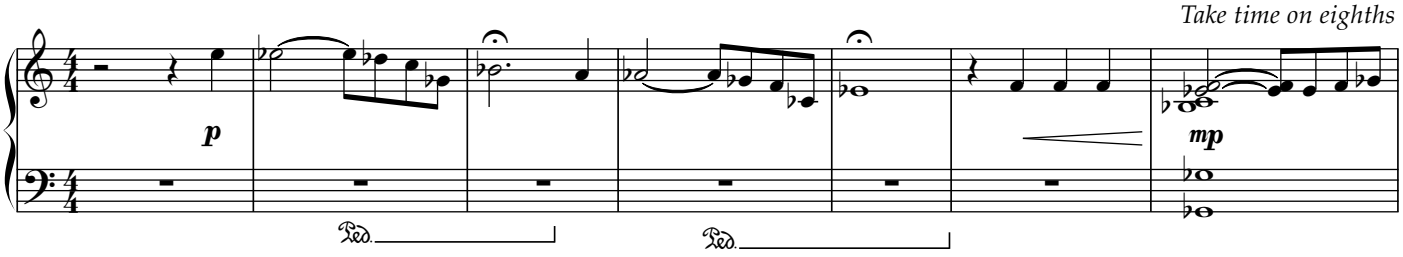
The First Prayer

for voice and piano

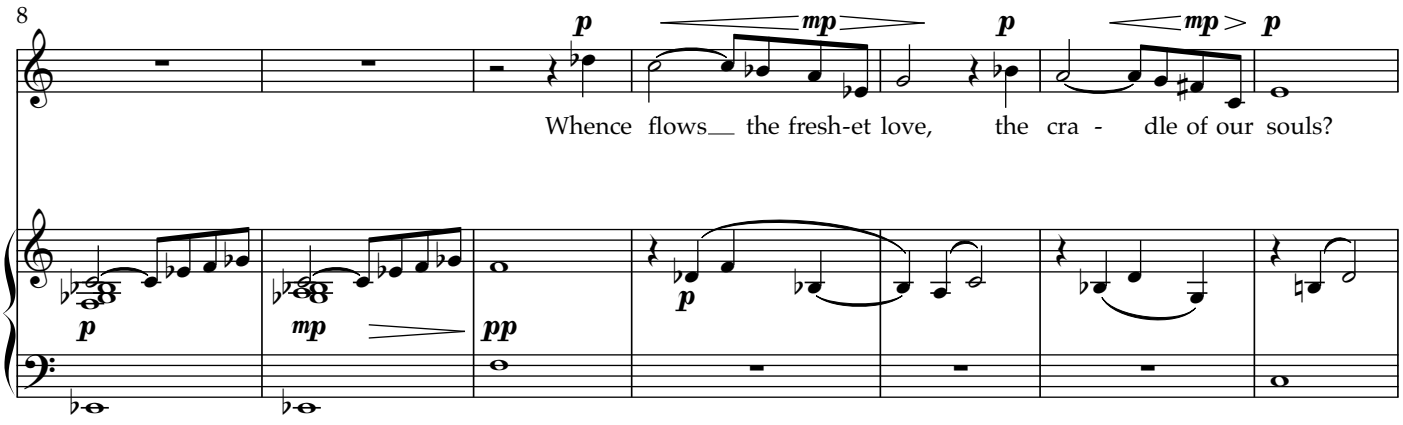
Music and Text by
Katharina S. G. Mueller

Contemplative, freely, around ♩=72

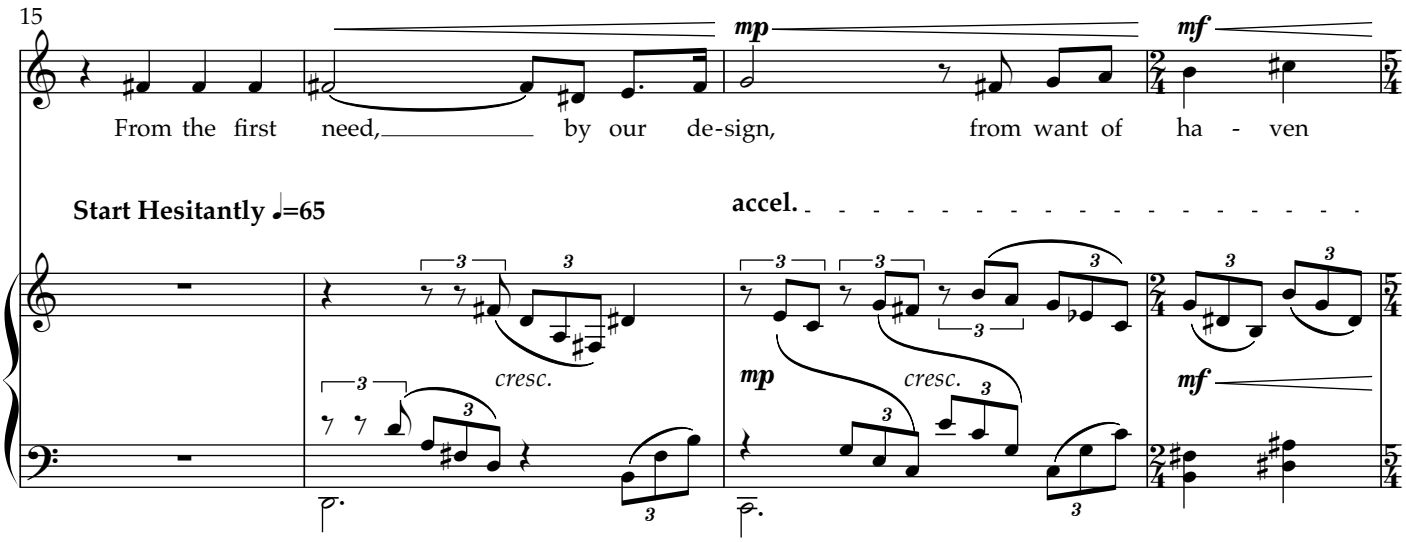
Take time on eighths

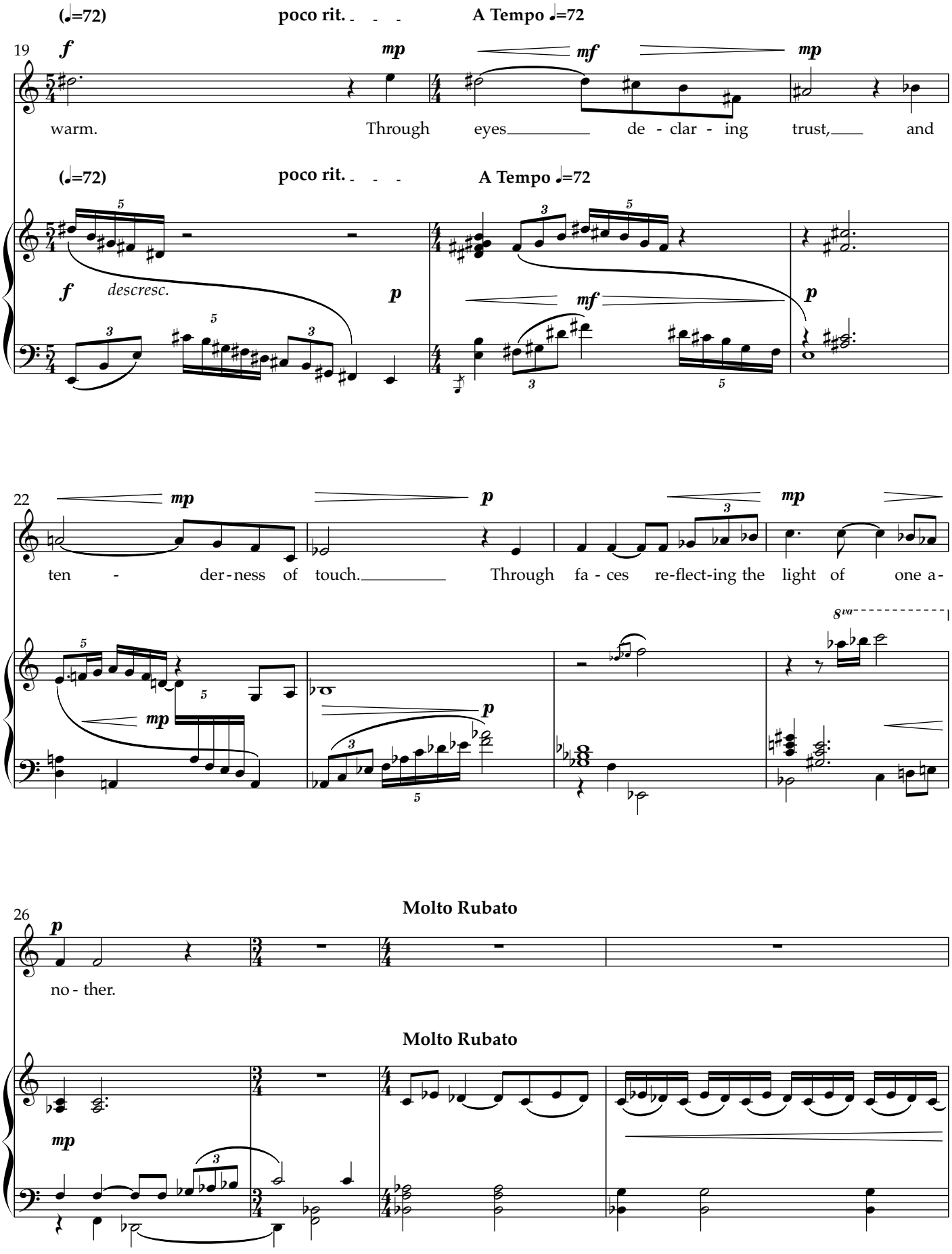


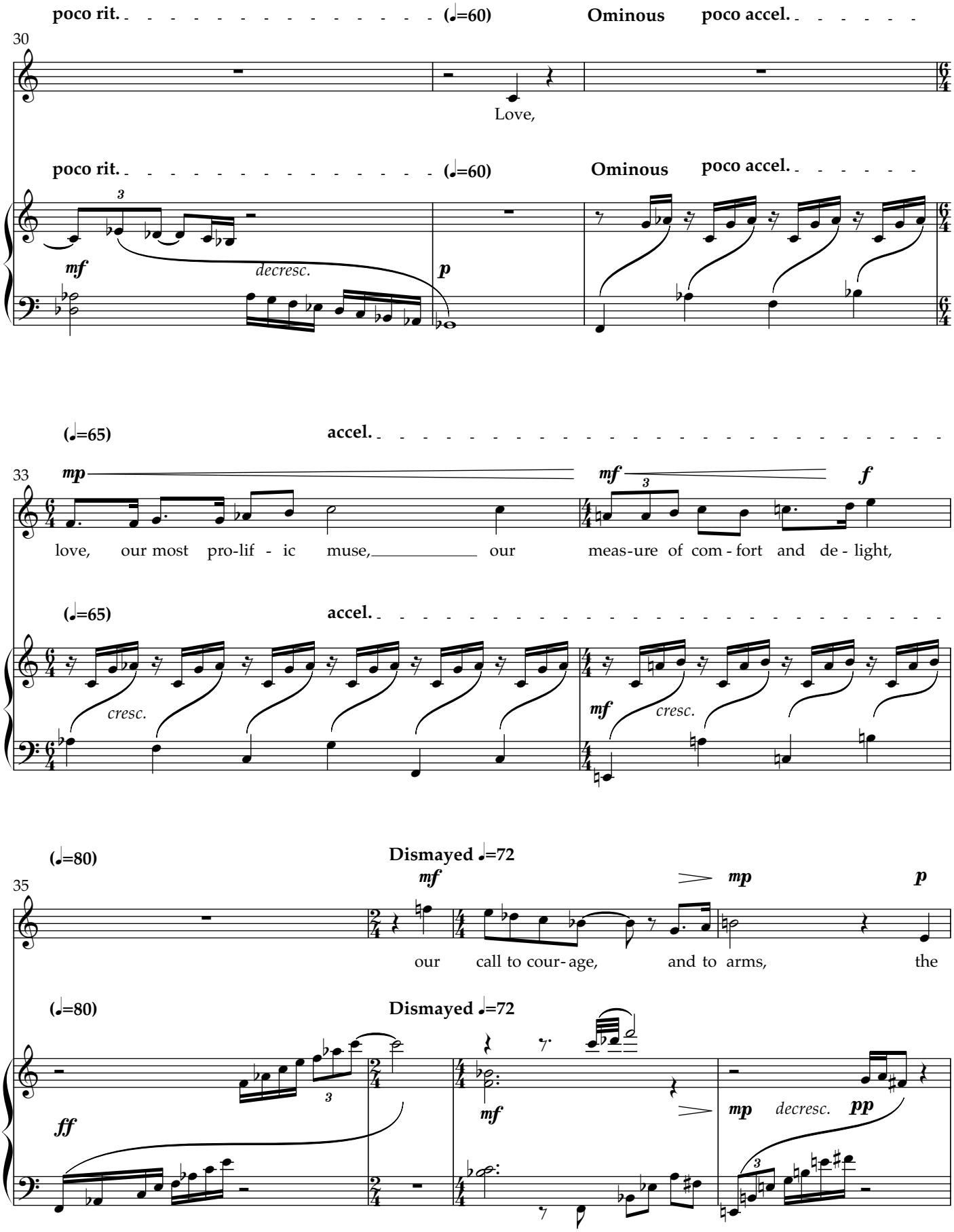
In Tempo ♩=72



Start Hesitantly ♩=65 **accel.**




(♩=72)
poco rit.
A Tempo ♩=72
19
f
mp
mf
mp
warm. Through eyes de - clar - ing trust, and
(♩=72)
poco rit.
A Tempo ♩=72
f
descresc.
p
mf
p
22
mp
p
mp
ten - der-ness of touch. Through fa - ces re-flect-ing the light of one a-
8va
mp
p
26
p
no - ther.
Molto Rubato
Molto Rubato
mp


poco rit.
(♩=60)
Ominous
poco accel.
30
Love,
poco rit.
(♩=60)
Ominous
poco accel.
mf
decresc.
p
(♩=65)
accel.
33
mp
mf
f
love, our most pro-lif - ic muse, our meas-ure of com - fort and de - light,
(♩=65)
accel.
cresc.
mf
cresc.
(♩=80)
Dismayed ♩=72
35
mf
mp
p
our call to cour-age, and to arms, the
(♩=80)
Dismayed ♩=72
ff
mf
mp
decresc.
pp

39

ff **Turbulent** **accel.**

al- ter of all our sac-ri fice!

Turbulent **accel.**

ff

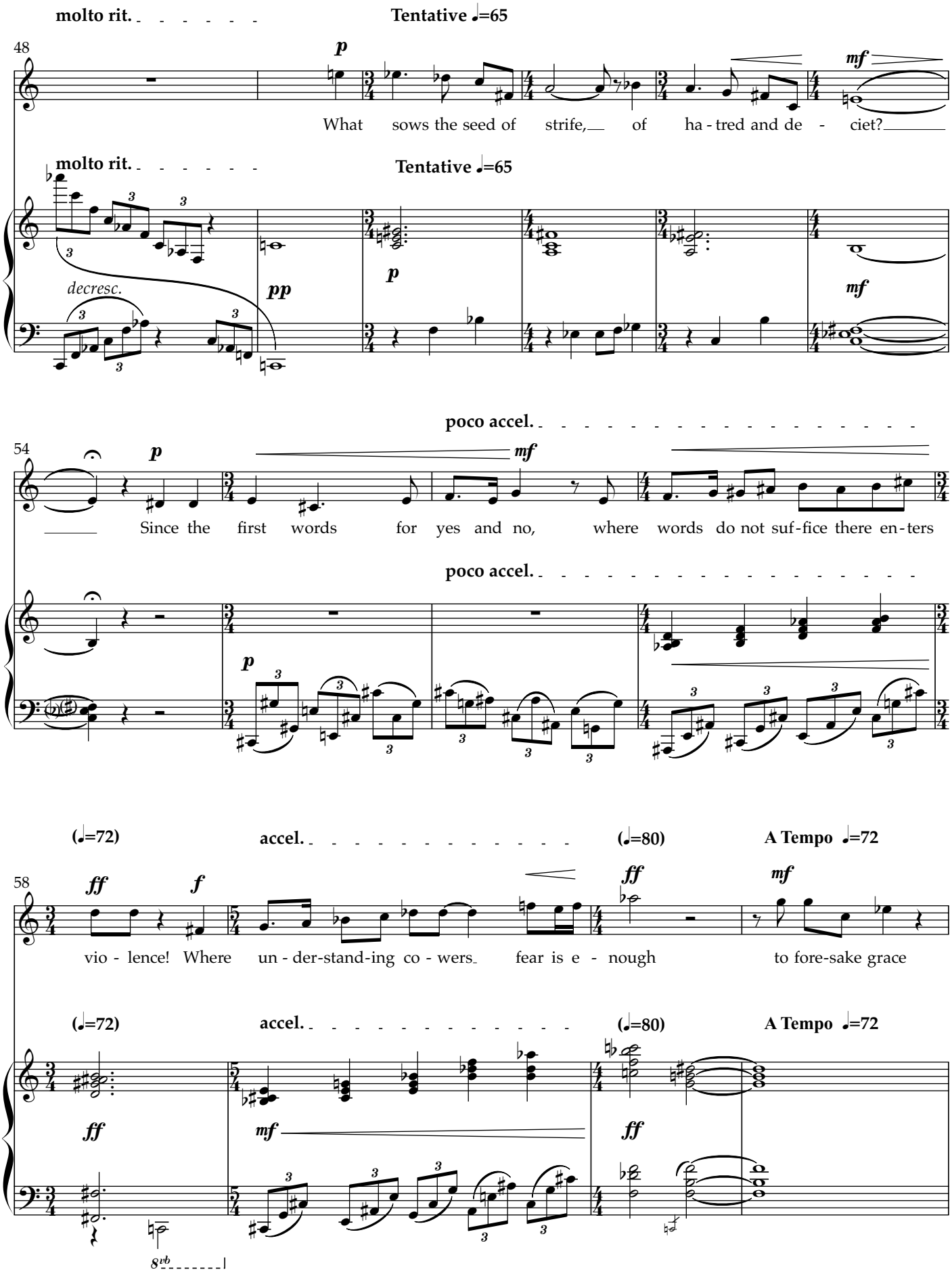
In Tempo ♩=72 **accel.** **♩=72** **accel.**

p *ff* *p* *mf*

45

Slightly Faster ♩=80

p *cresc.* *f* *mp* *cresc.* *ff* *mp* *cresc.* *f*


molto rit.
Tentative ♩=65
48
p
mf
What sows the seed of strife, of ha - tred and de - ciet?
molto rit.
Tentative ♩=65
decresc.
pp
p
mf
poco accel.
54
p
mf
Since the first words for yes and no, where words do not suf-fice there en-ters
poco accel.
p
(♩=72)
accel.
(♩=80)
A Tempo ♩=72
58
ff
f
ff
mf
vio - lence! Where un - der-stand-ing co - wers fear is e - nough to fore-sake grace
(♩=72)
accel.
(♩=80)
A Tempo ♩=72
ff
mf
ff
8vb

62

Start Hesitantly ♩=65

mp *p*

and cease hu-man-i- ty From threat of loss of our be

Start Hesitantly ♩=65

mp *decresc.* *pp*

mp *p*

67

accel. **Agitated ♩=72**

mf

lo - ved, mis car - ried for - tune or press - ing por - tent, comes

accel. **Agitated ♩=72**

cresc.

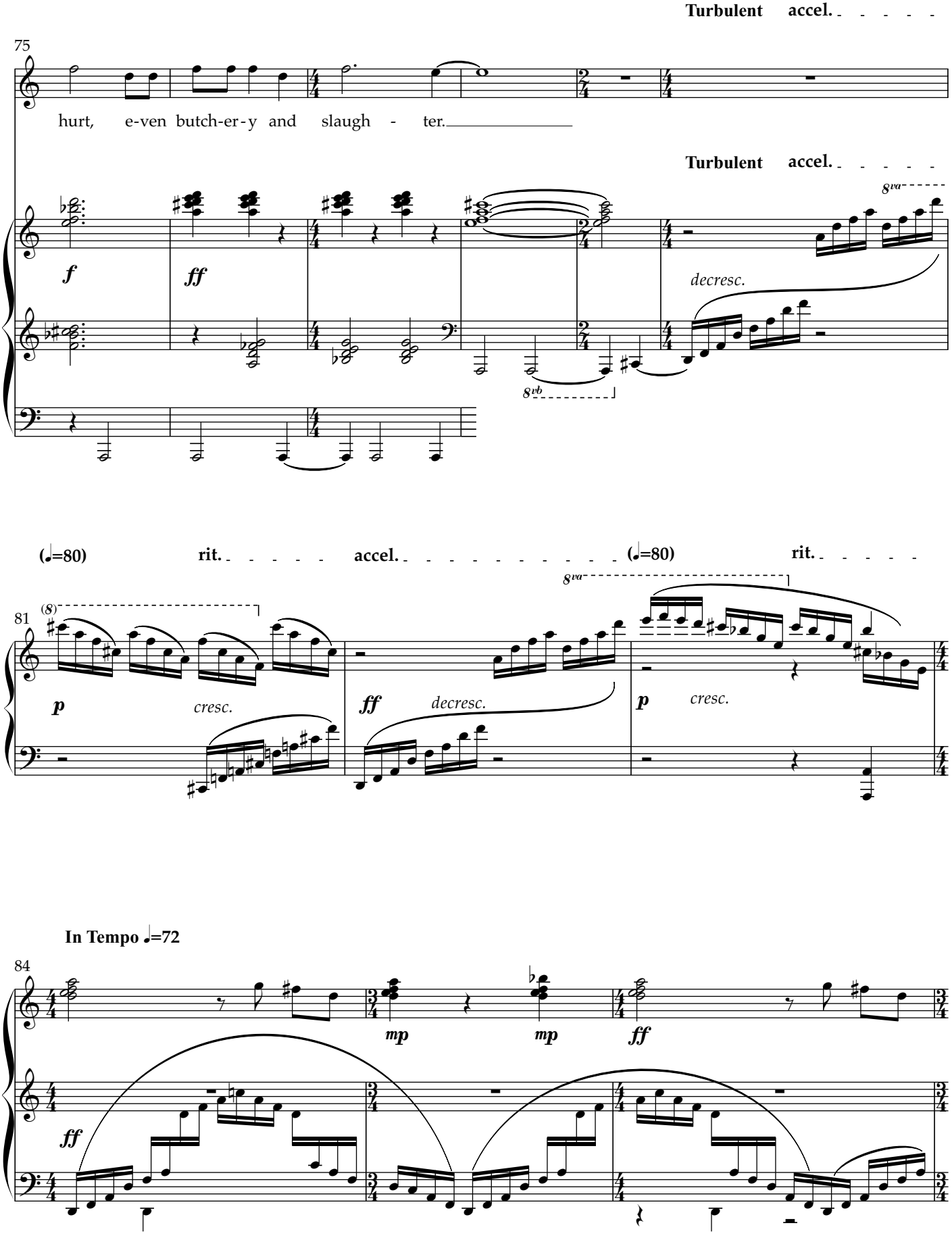
f

70

ff

an - ger in - dis - crim - i - nate, and love is but an a - li - as for harm, for

decresc. *p* *mf* *decresc.* *p* *f*


Turbulent accel.
75
hurt, e-ven butch-er-y and slaugh - ter.
Turbulent accel.
8va
f
ff
decresc.
8vb
(♩=80)
rit.
accel.
(♩=80)
rit.
81
(8)
8va
p
cresc.
ff
decresc.
p
cresc.
In Tempo ♩=72
84
mp
mp
ff
ff

87

90

decresc.

molto rit. ♩=60

Rubato

92

p ***mp*** ***pp***

Was greed once a love turned foul?

molto rit. ♩=60

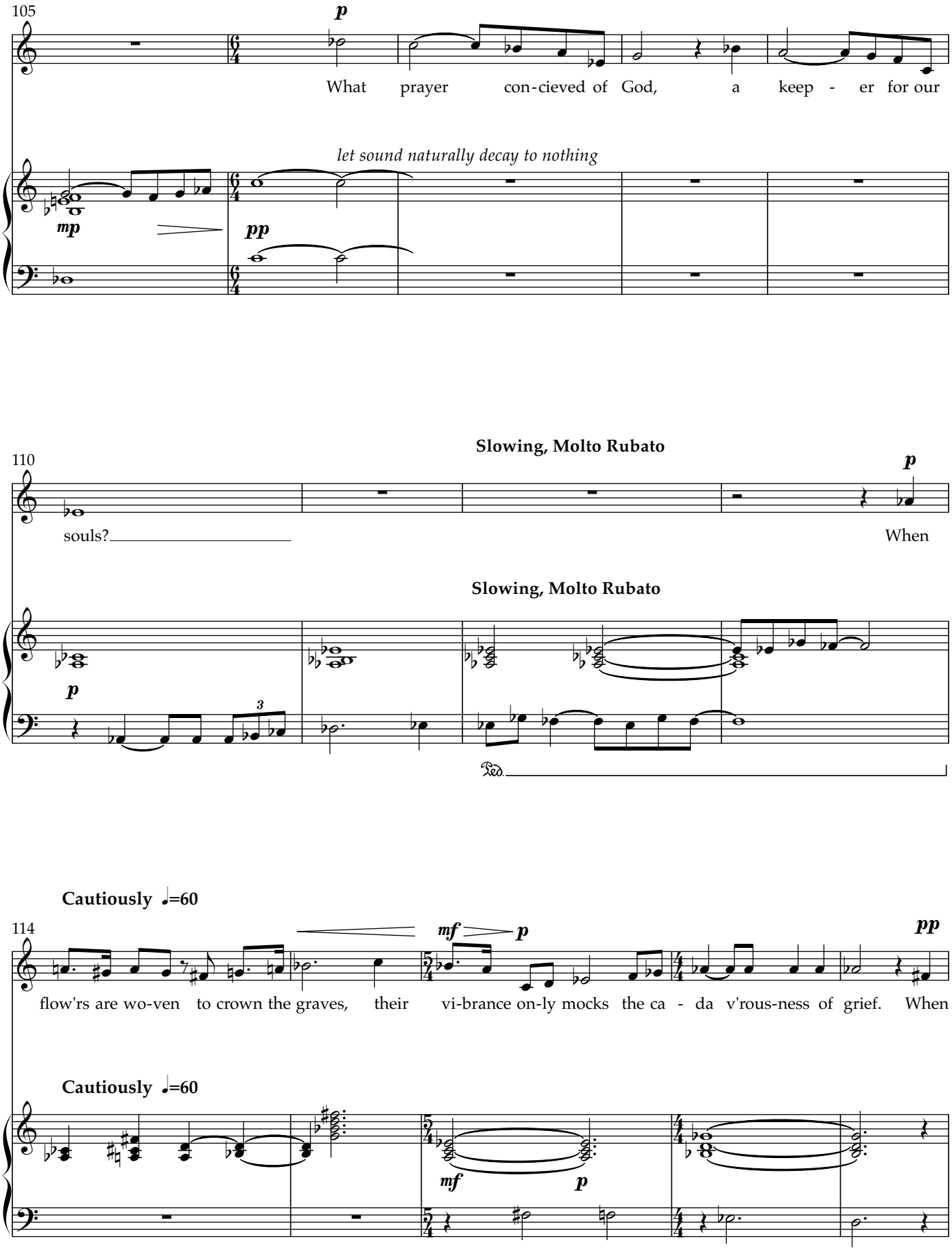
mf ***p*** ***mp***

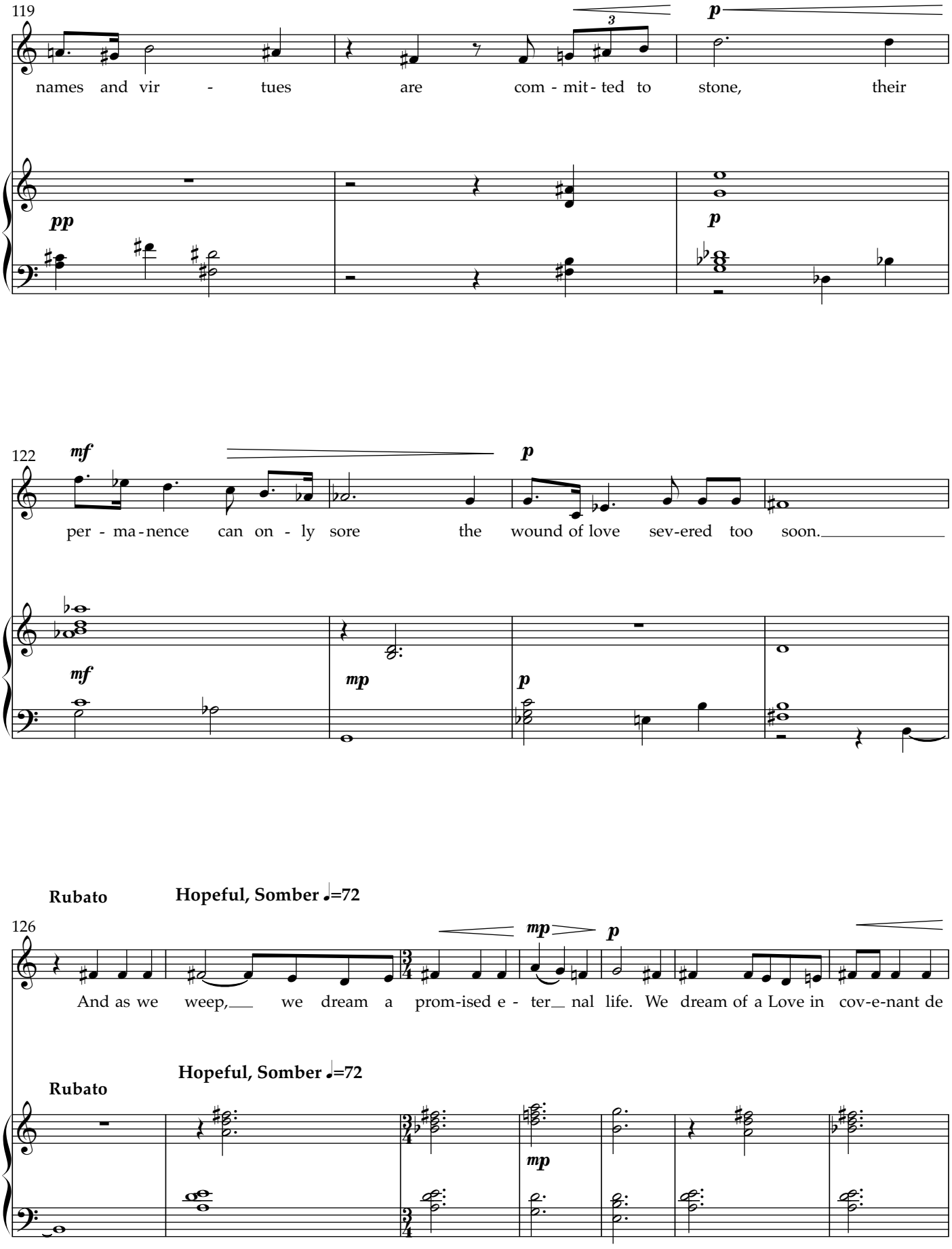
Contemplative ♩=72

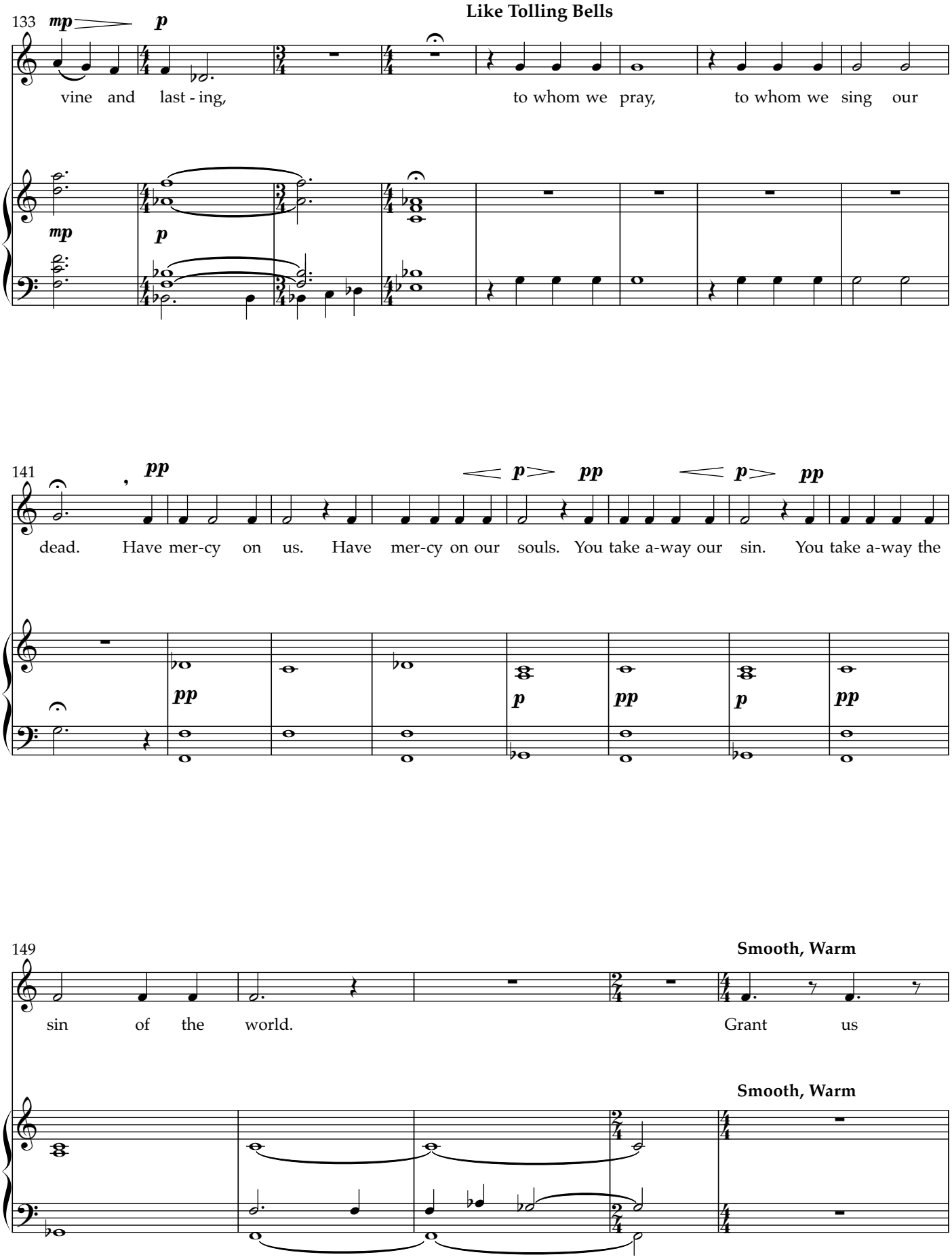
Take time on eighths

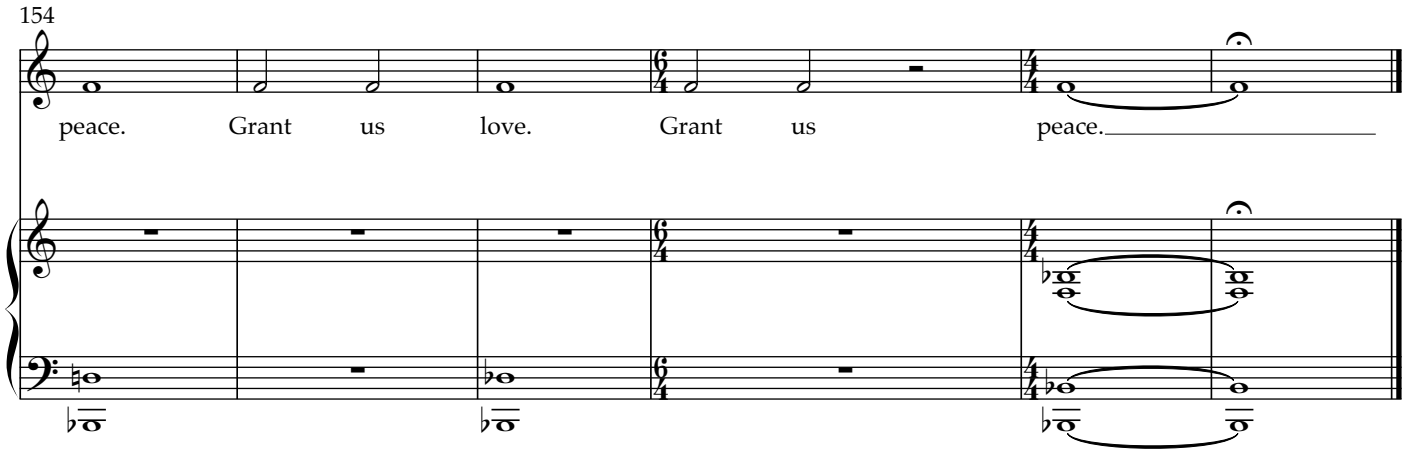
96

pp ***mp*** ***p*** ***pp***


105
p
What prayer con-cieved of God, a keep - er for our
let sound naturally decay to nothing
mp
pp
110
Slowing, Molto Rubato
p
souls?
When
Slowing, Molto Rubato
p
3
Ped.
Cautiously ♩=60
114
mf
p
pp
flow'rs are wo-ven to crown the graves, their vi-brance on-ly mocks the ca - da v'rous-ness of grief. When
Cautiously ♩=60
mf
p


119
names and vir - tues are com - mit - ted to stone, their
pp
p
p
122
mf
per - ma - nence can on - ly sore the wound of love sev-ered too soon.
mf
mp
p
Rubato
Hopeful, Somber ♩=72
126
mp
p
And as we weep, we dream a prom-ised e - ter nal life. We dream of a Love in cov-e-nant de
Rubato
Hopeful, Somber ♩=72
mp


Like Tolling Bells
133
mp
p
vine and last - ing,
to whom we pray,
to whom we sing our
mp
p
141
pp
p
pp
p
pp
dead. Have mer-cy on us. Have mer-cy on our souls. You take a-way our sin. You take a-way the
pp
p
pp
p
pp
149
Smooth, Warm
sin of the world.
Grant us
Smooth, Warm


154
peace. Grant us love. Grant us peace.