The Last Voyage of Captain Meriwether Lewis

FIVE DRAMATIC SONGS
for
TENOR OR HIGH BARITONE
and
PIANO

Lyrics by
JASON CHARNESKY
Music by
BRUCE TRINKLEY

THE LAST VOYAGE OF CAPTAIN MERIWETHER LEWIS

Dramatic Song Cycle for High Baritone or Tenor and Piano

Lyrics by Jason Charnesky
Music by Bruce Trinkley

The Last Voyage of Captain Meriwether Lewis is a dramatic song cycle based on the life of Meriwether Lewis and the Voyage of Discovery to the source of the Missouri River, across the Rocky Mountains and down the Snake and Columbia Rivers to the Pacific Ocean.

Meriwether Lewis was born in Virginia in 1774 and grew up within walking distance of Thomas Jefferson's Monticello. After serving as an Army field commander, Lewis became President Jefferson's private secretary, during which time Jefferson began to groom the young man for an expedition west across the Mississippi. Lewis, an experienced woodsman, fair-minded leader, and staunch patriot, became under Jefferson's tutelage a naturalist of unusual observational prowess and a capable amateur astronomer. The Lewis and Clark Expedition through the newly acquired Louisiana Purchase gave Americans their first documented report of the Indian nations, the river paths, the wildlife and the natural riches of the lands west of the Mississippi. Lewis returned East a hero and was made Governor of the Louisiana Territory.

Success did not last long however. Having contracted malaria during the voyage, Lewis had been treated with opium and developed a habit for both opiates and excessive drink. His proposals for marriage were rejected. And he soon made enemies in his position as Governor. With a change of Administration, the Federal Government's attitude towards Lewis hardened. The Secretary of the Treasury accused Lewis of financial mismanagement. In 1809 Lewis determined to travel to Washington to defend himself against these unfair charges. Lewis, who had always been prone to bouts of melancholy, was weakened now by disease, drink, and calumny. He fell into suicidal fits of depression during the trip. Tragically, one night alone at Grinder's Inn on the Natchez Trace in Tennessee, Lewis in despair shot himself.

The song cycle begins with Lewis' last night when he doubts that his exploits and life have meant anything. The ensuing three songs follows the explorer as he remembers the exciting days with the men of the Corps of Discovery, the beautiful never-ending Missouri River, and then the treacherous crossing of the forbidding Bitterroot Mountains. In the last song Lewis takes courage in his accomplishments and departs this life heroically, knowing that he will be remembered as a great explorer and scientist.

The spoken parts of the cantata and much of the verse are based upon the journals of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark.

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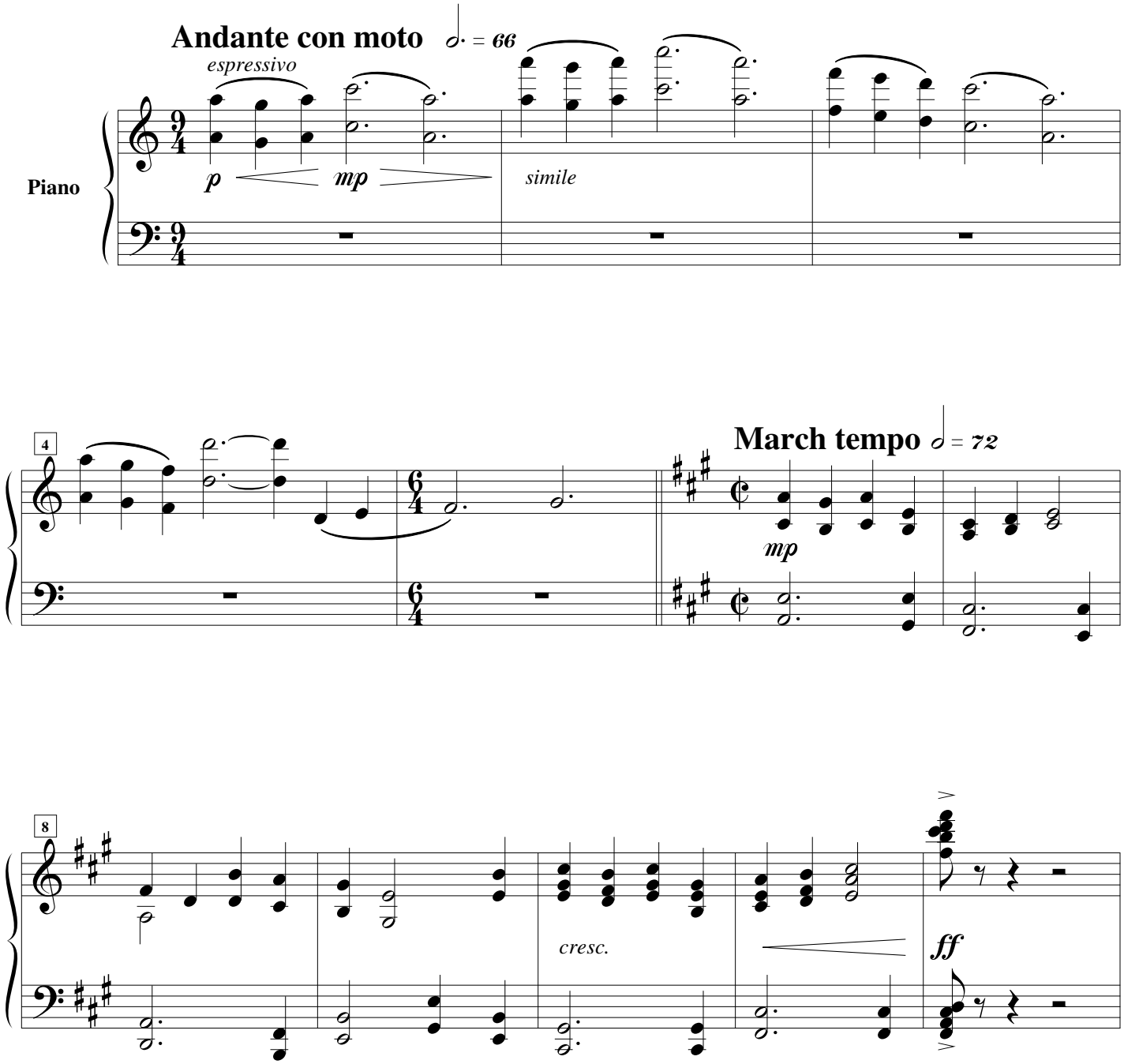
1. Last Light

Jason Charnesky **Bruce Trinkley**



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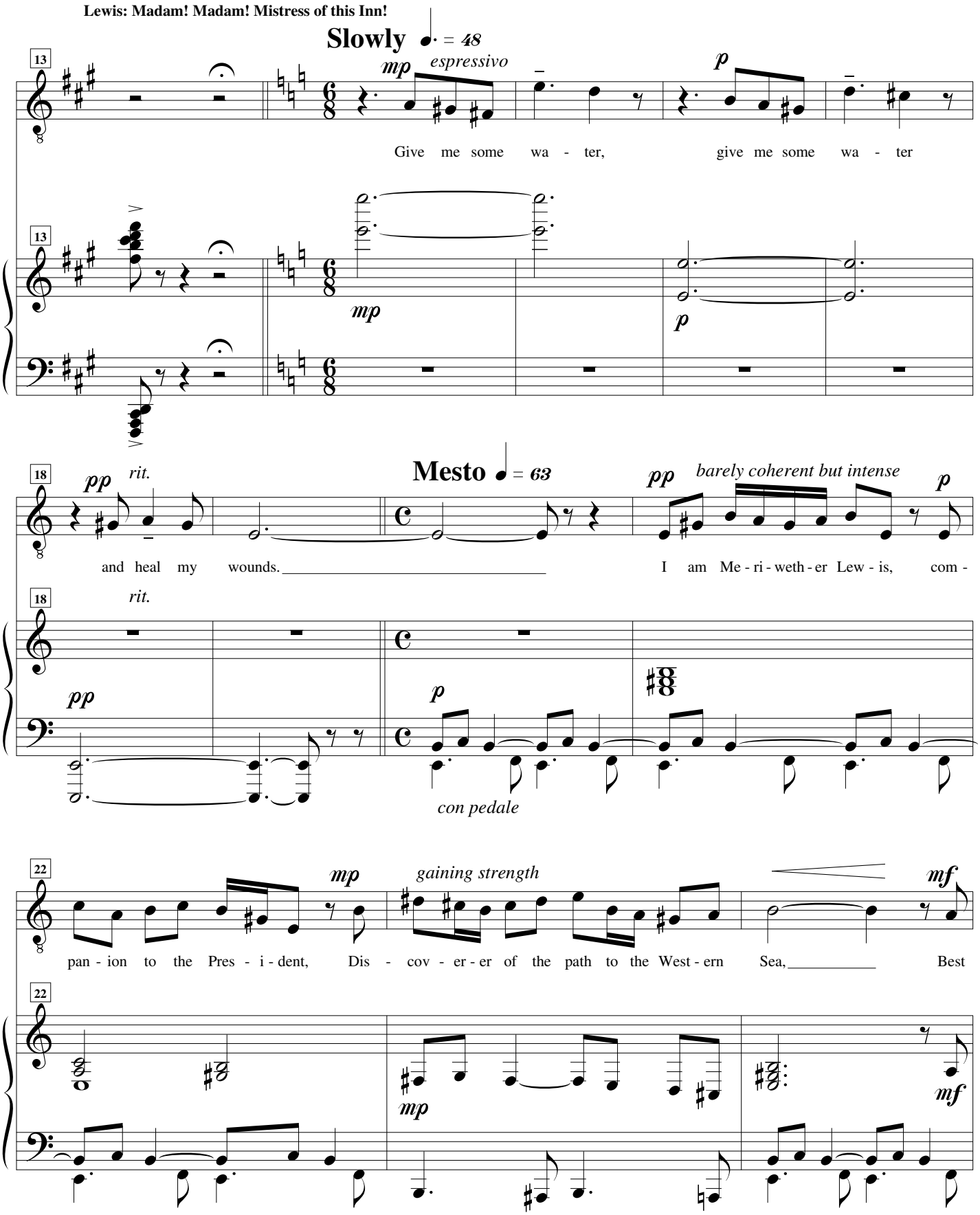

Lewis: Madam! Madam! Mistress of this Inn!
Slowly ♩. = 48
mp espressivo
p
Give me some wa - ter, give me some wa - ter
mp
p
pp rit.
Mesto ♩ = 63
pp barely coherent but intense
p
and heal my wounds.
I am Me - ri - weth - er Lew - is, com -
rit.
pp
p
con pedale
mp gaining strength
mf
pan - ion to the Pres - i - dent, Dis - cov - er - er of the path to the West - ern Sea, Best
mp
mf

25

f *holding back* *ff* *moving ahead* *mf* *faster*

friend of Cap - tain Wil - liam Clark. O Clark, Clark, come quick - ly now! For

25

f *sonore*

30

rit. **Slowly** *f*

I have done the bus - 'ness, the bus - 'ness of my coun - try. And my life has

30

rit.

f

34

moving ahead *mf* *holding back* *mp* *rubato* *half-spoken*

run to this sad des - per - ate ma - neu - ver. I have in my des - pair twice shot my - self.

34

moving ahead *holding back*

mf *mp* *p*

Andante ♩ = 84

38

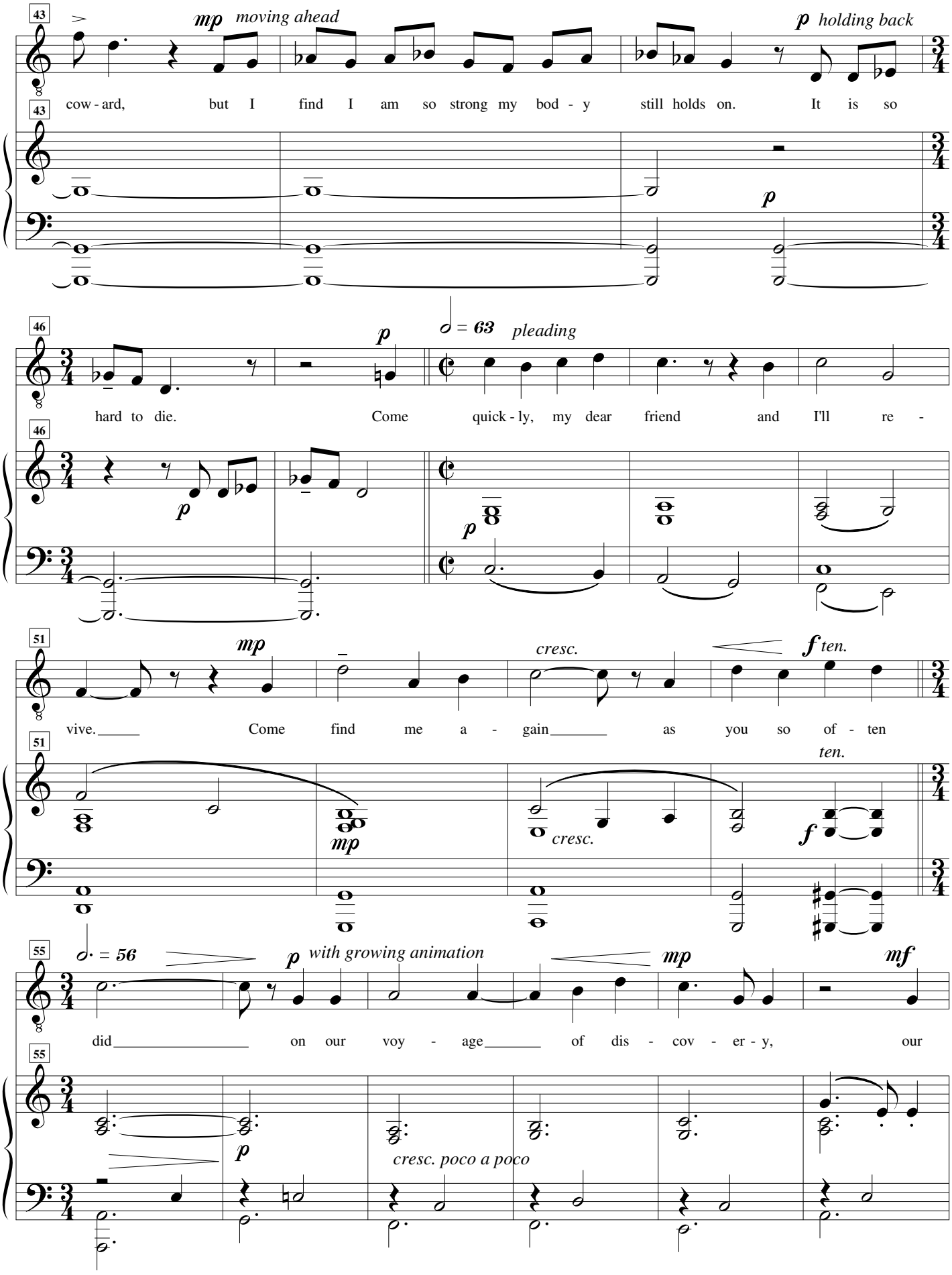
pp cresc. *f ten.* *passionately* *ff*

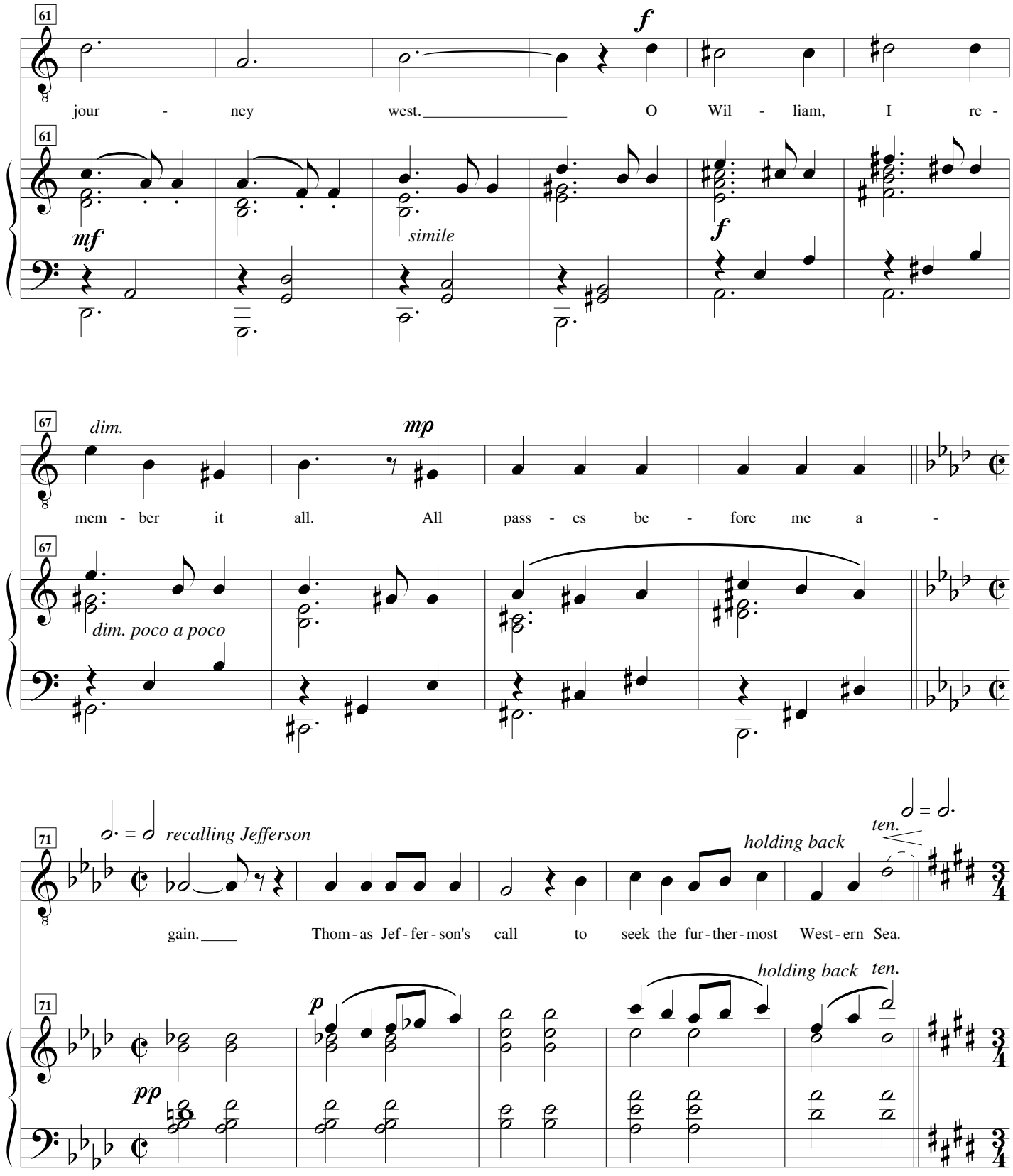
O Wil - liam, Wil - liam Clark. I am no

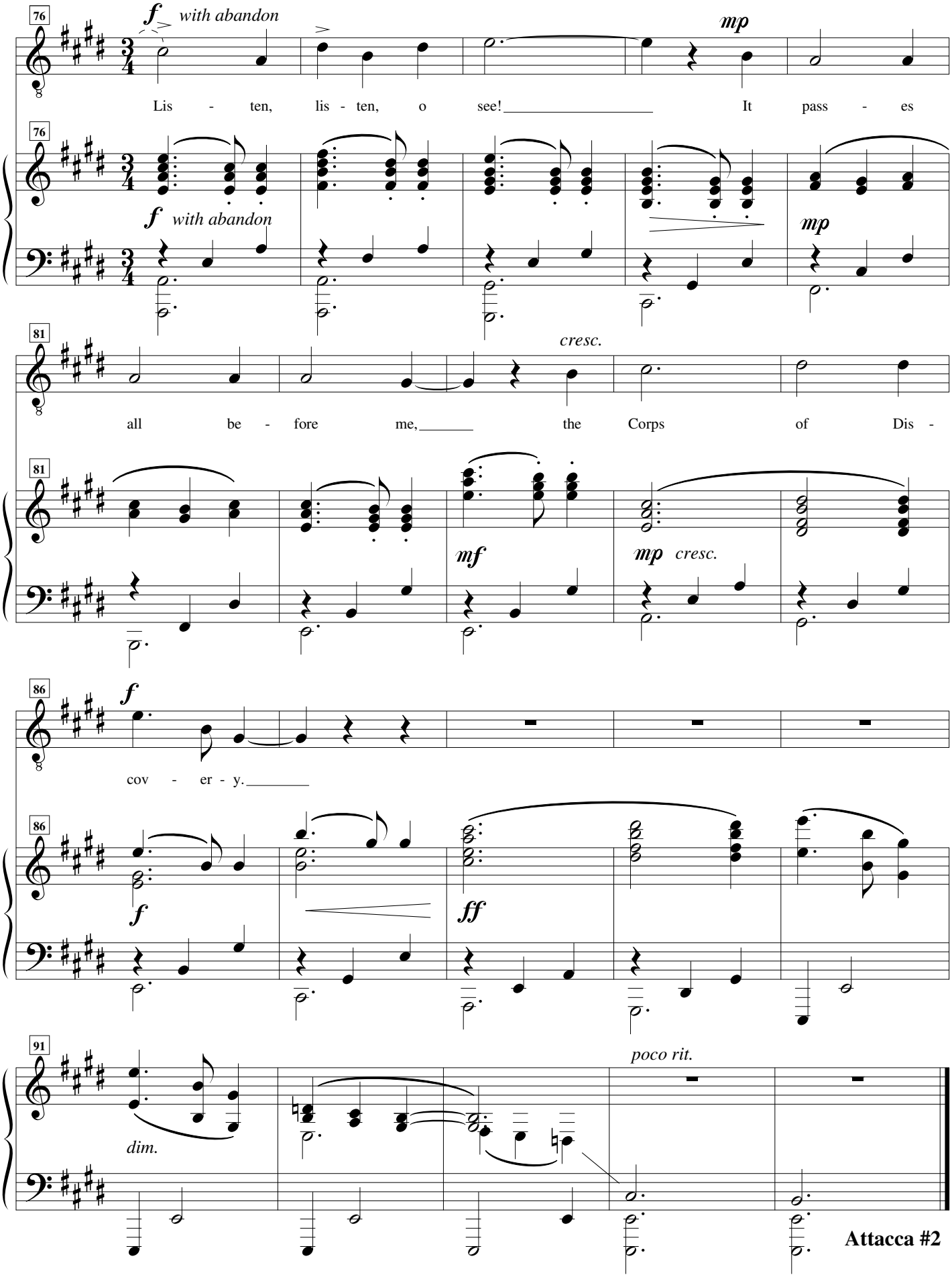
38

8va

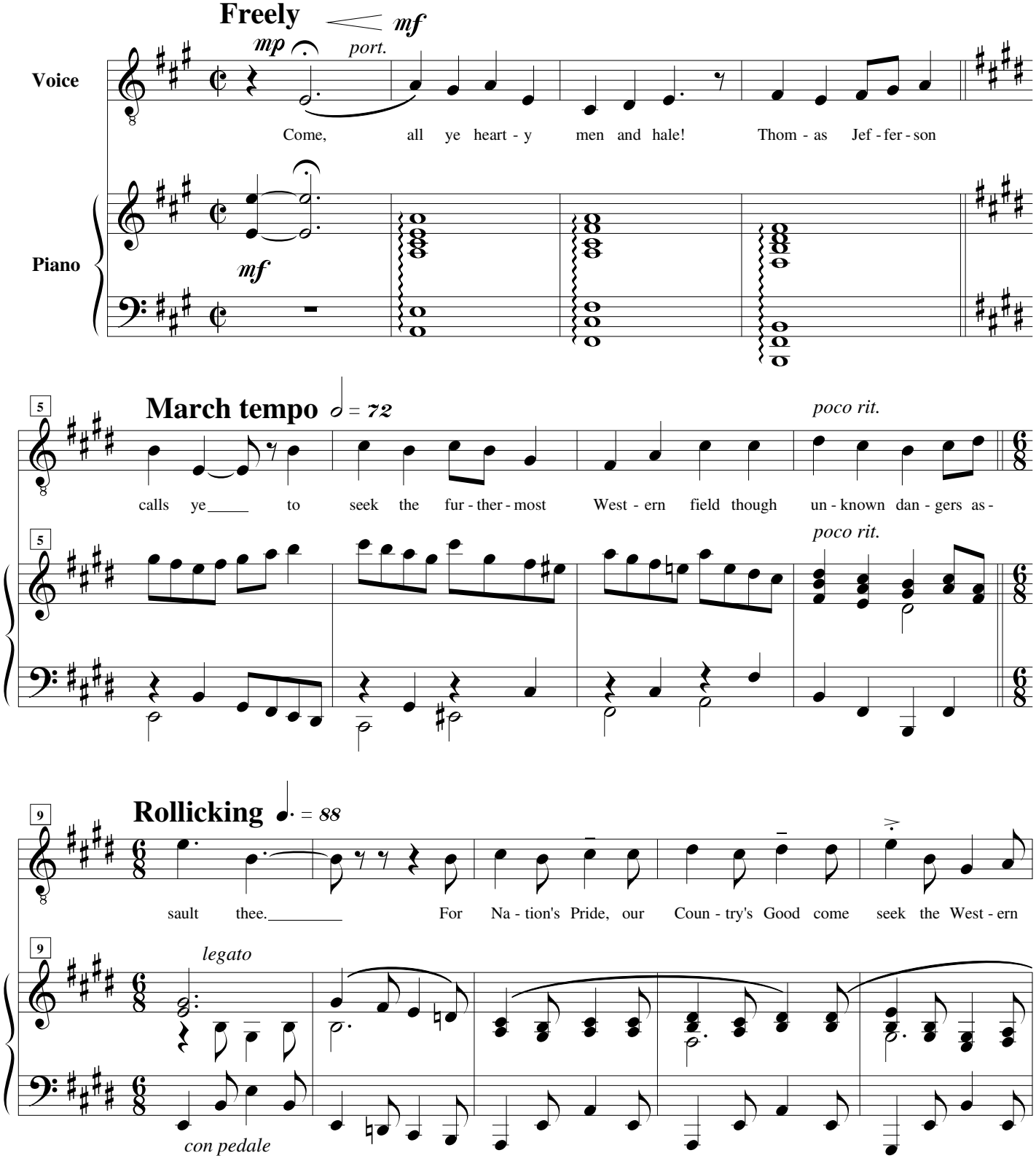
mf *ff*

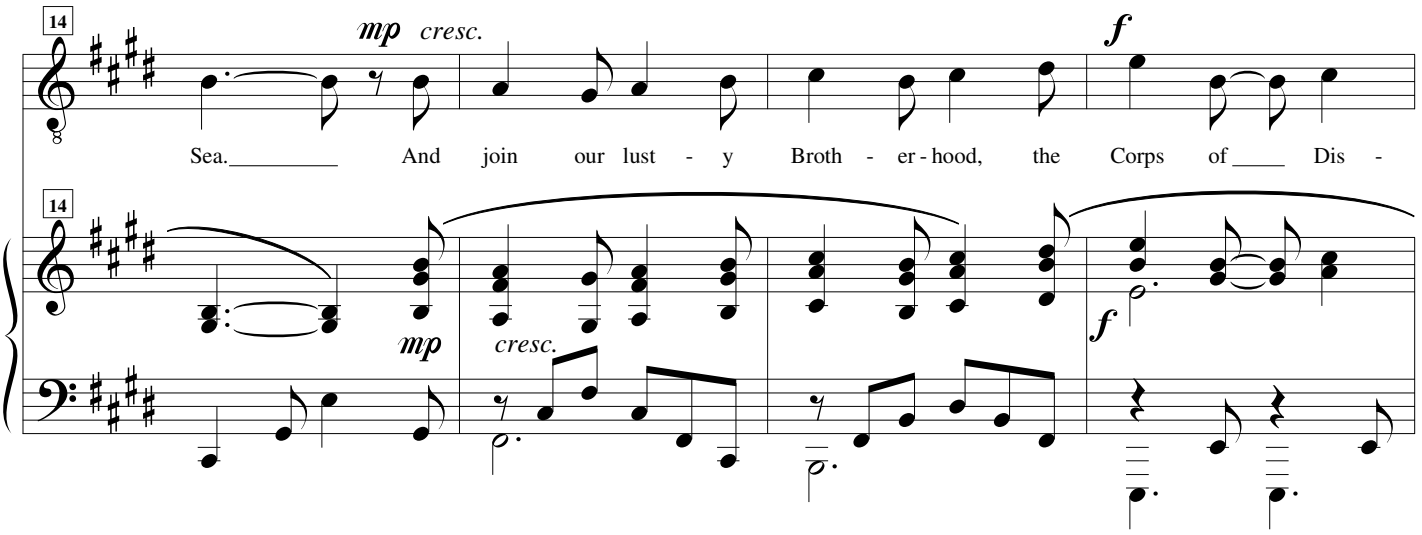

43
mp moving ahead
p holding back
cow - ard, but I find I am so strong my bod - y still holds on. It is so
43
p
46
p
♩ = 63 pleading
hard to die. Come quick - ly, my dear friend and I'll re -
46
p
p
51
mp
cresc.
f ten.
vive. Come find me a - gain as you so of - ten
51
ten.
mp
cresc.
f
55
♩. = 56
p with growing animation
mp
mf
did on our voy - age of dis - cov - er - y, our
55
p
cresc. poco a poco


61
f
jour - ney west. O Wil - liam, I re -
mf
simile
f
67
dim.
mp
mem - ber it all. All pass - es be - fore me a -
dim. poco a poco
71
recalling Jefferson
holding back
ten.
gain. Thom - as Jef - fer - son's call to seek the fur - ther - most West - ern Sea.
p
pp

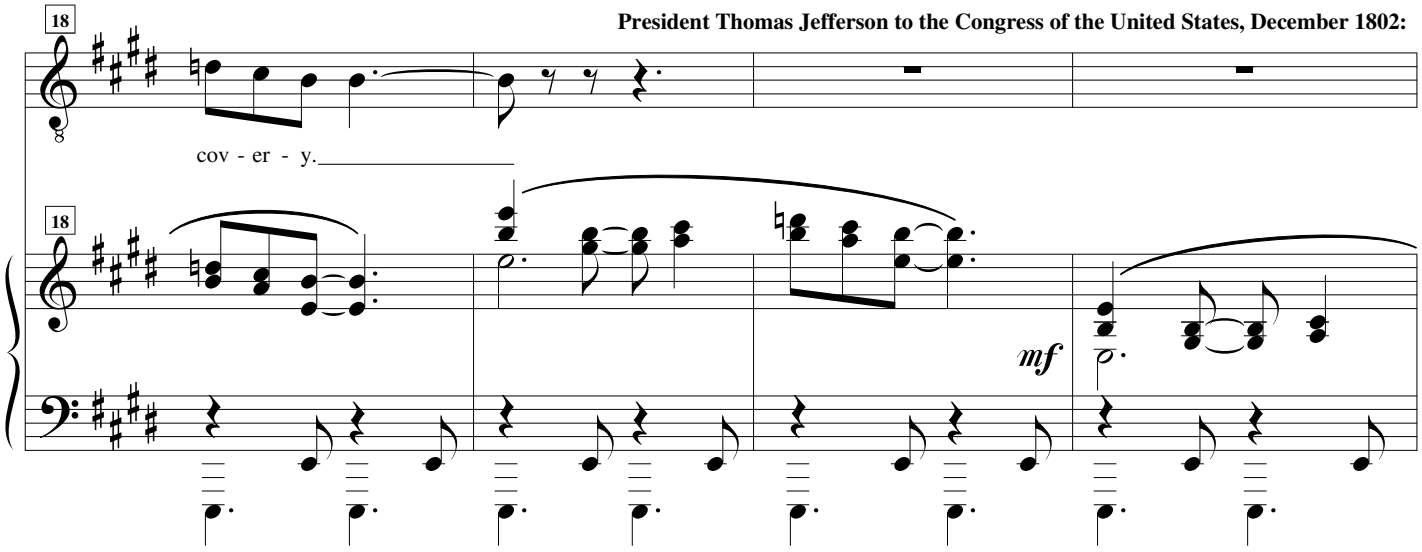

76
f with abandon
mp
Lis - ten, lis - ten, o see! It pass - es
f with abandon
mp
81
cresc.
all be - fore me, the Corps of Dis -
mf
mp cresc.
86
f
cov - er - y.
f
ff
91
poco rit.
dim.
Attacca #2

2. The Corps of Discovery

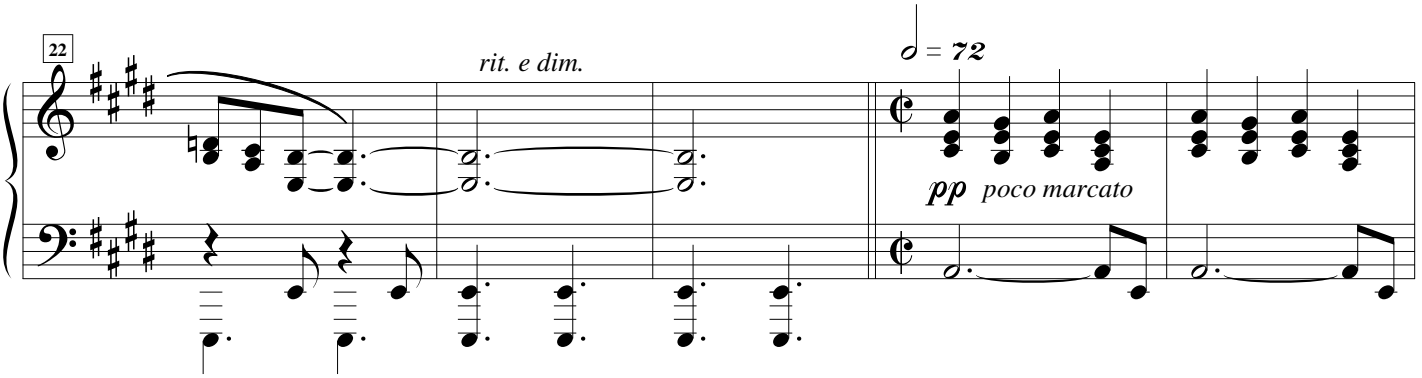




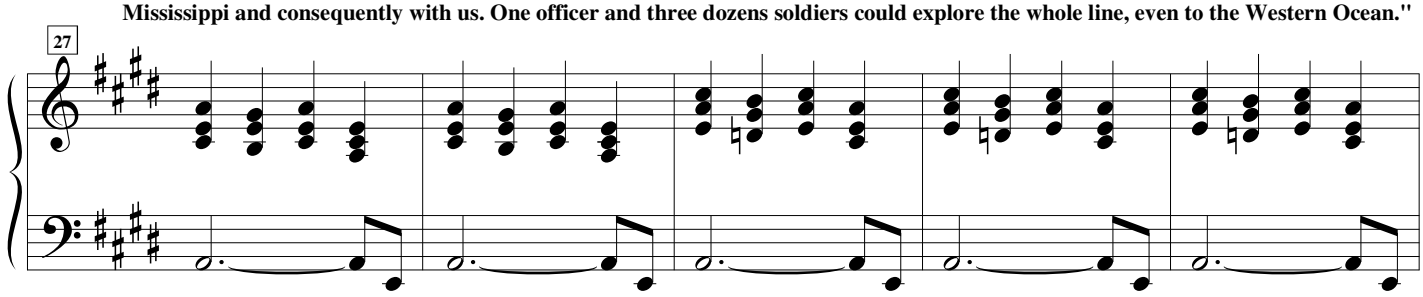
President Thomas Jefferson to the Congress of the United States, December 1802:

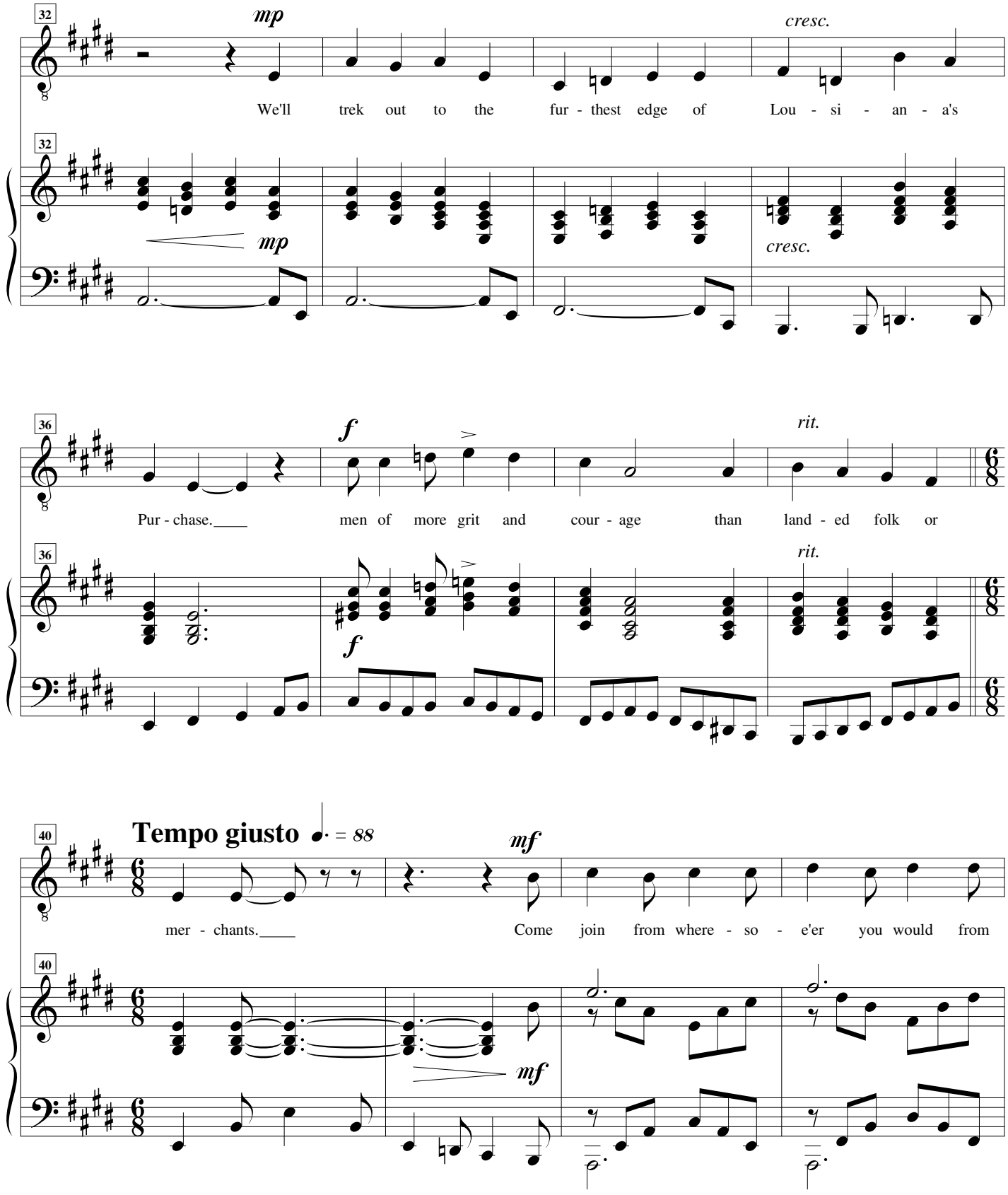


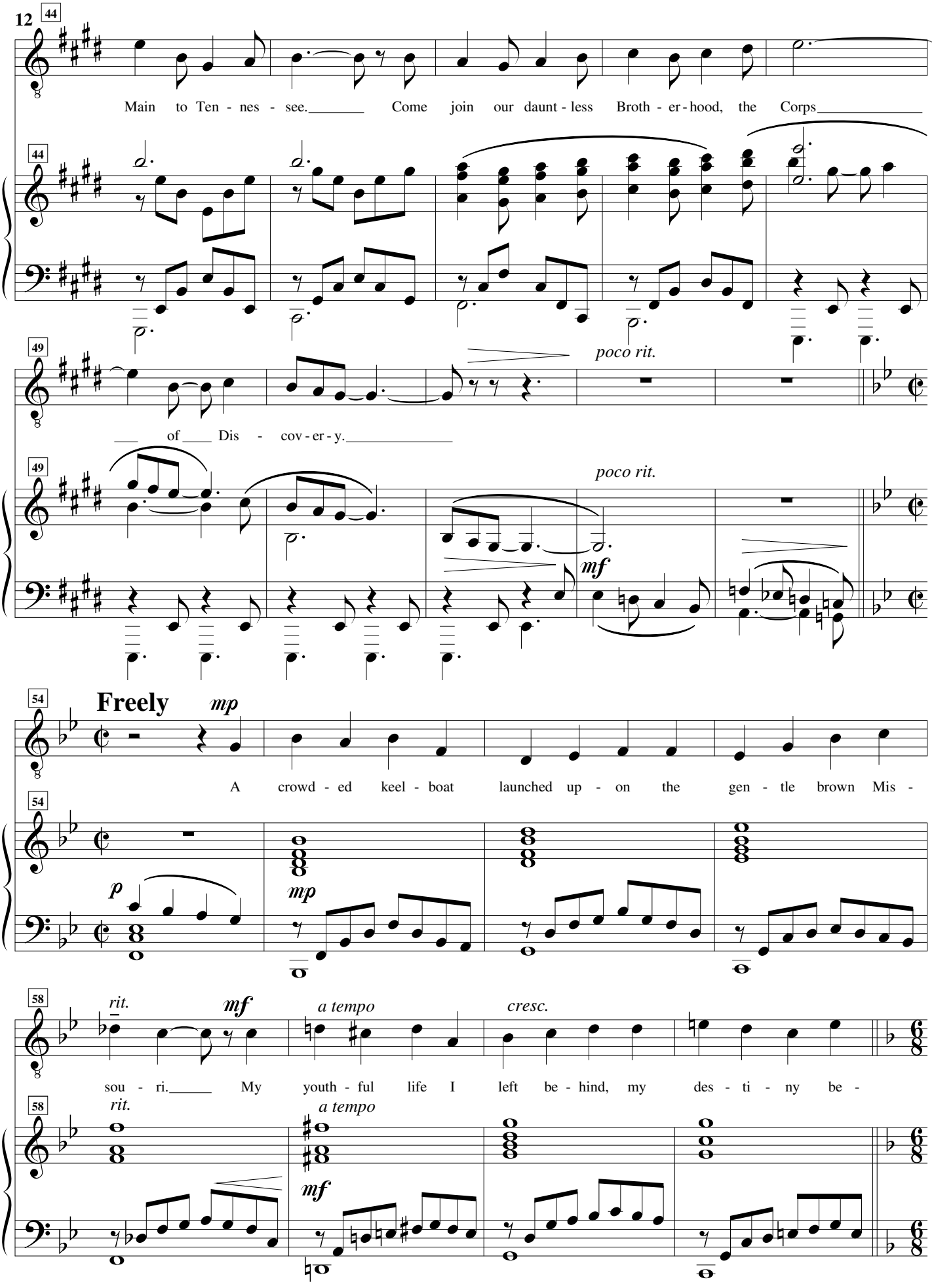
"The river Missouri and the Indians inhabiting it are not as well known as is rendered desirable by their connection with the

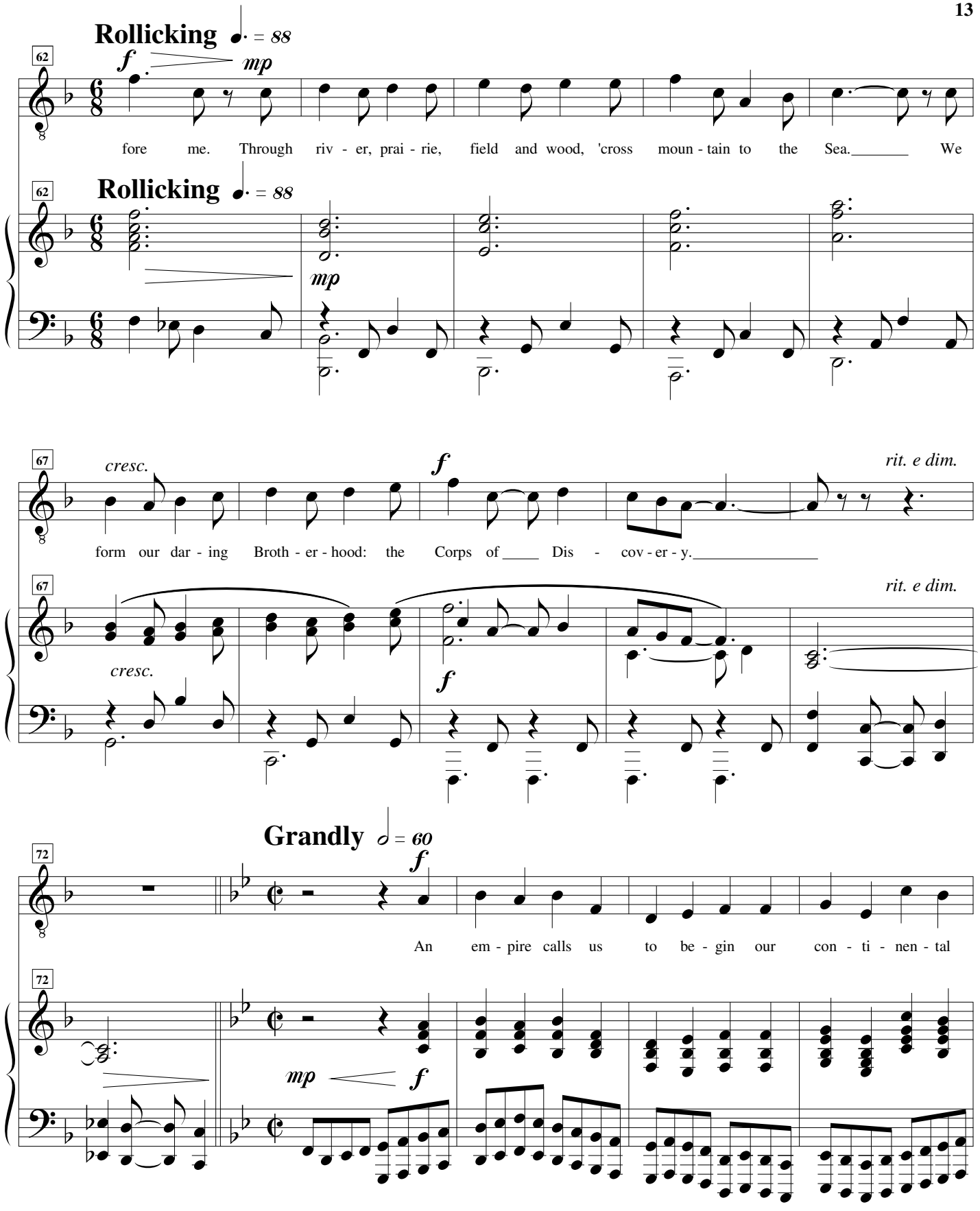


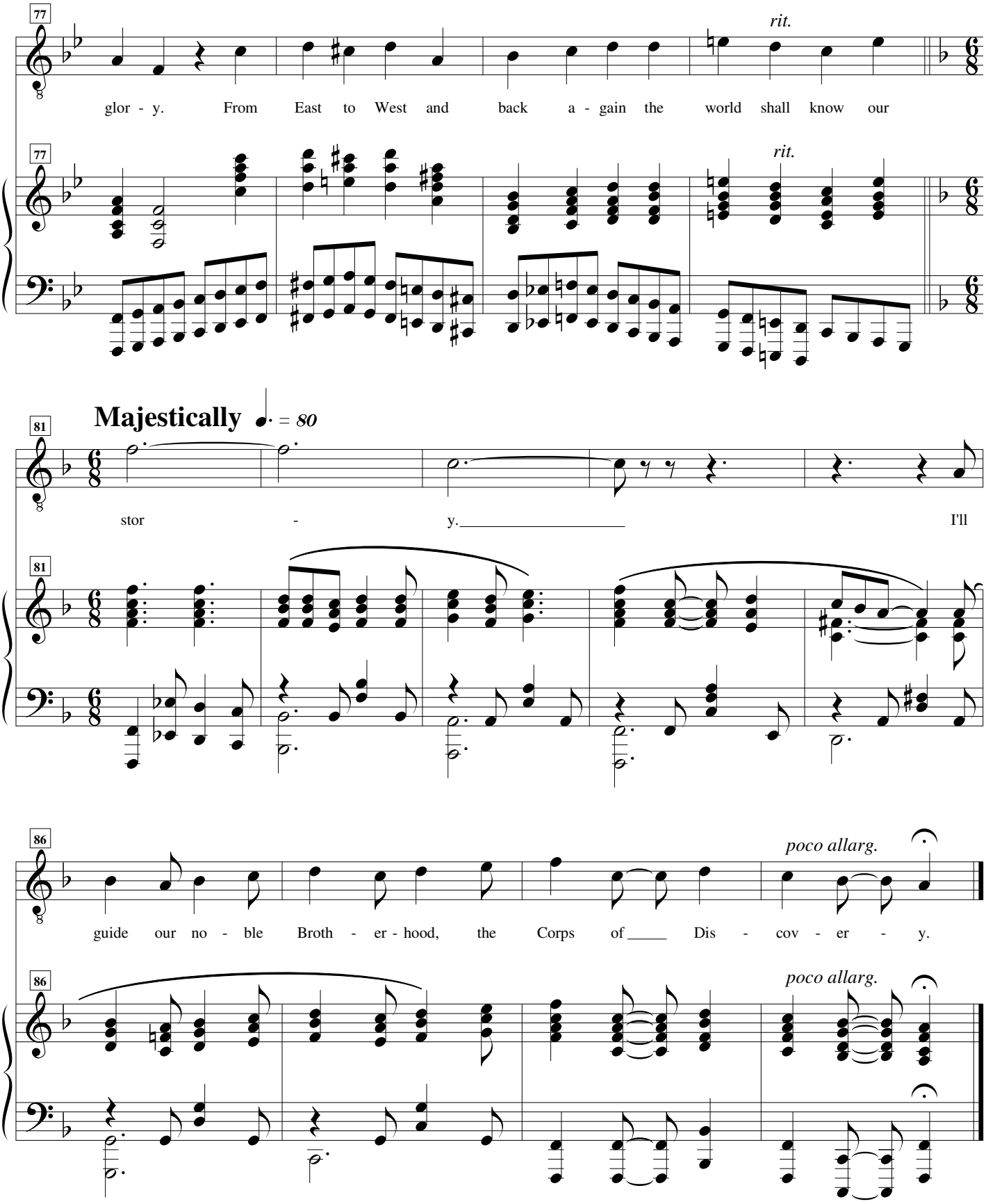
Mississippi and consequently with us. One officer and three dozens soldiers could explore the whole line, even to the Western Ocean."



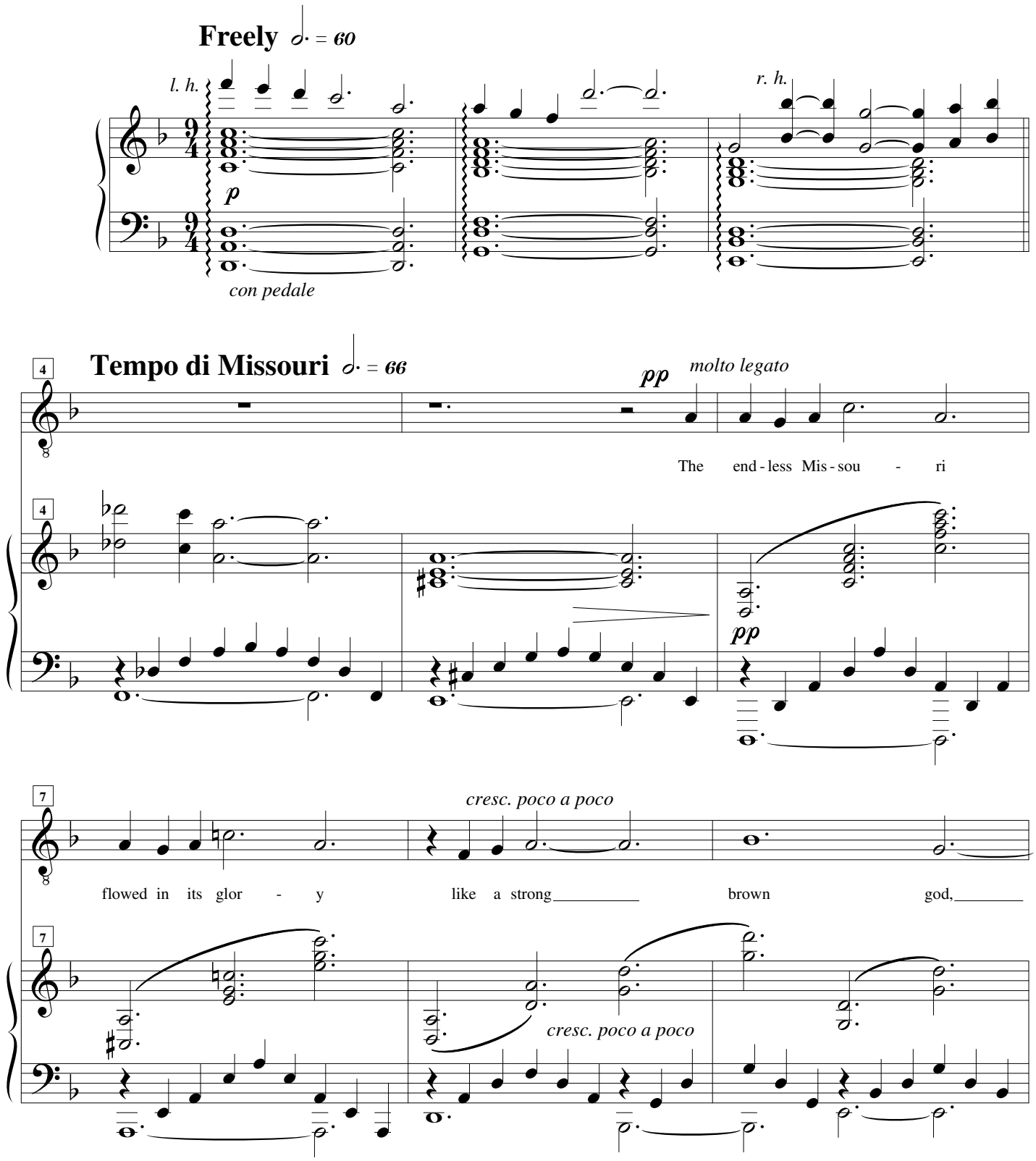

32
mp
cresc.
We'll trek out to the fur - thest edge of Lou - si - an - a's
mp
cresc.
36
f
rit.
Pur - chase.____ men of more grit and cour - age than land - ed folk or
f
rit.
40
Tempo giusto
= 88
mf
mer - chants.____ Come join from where - so - e'er you would from
mf

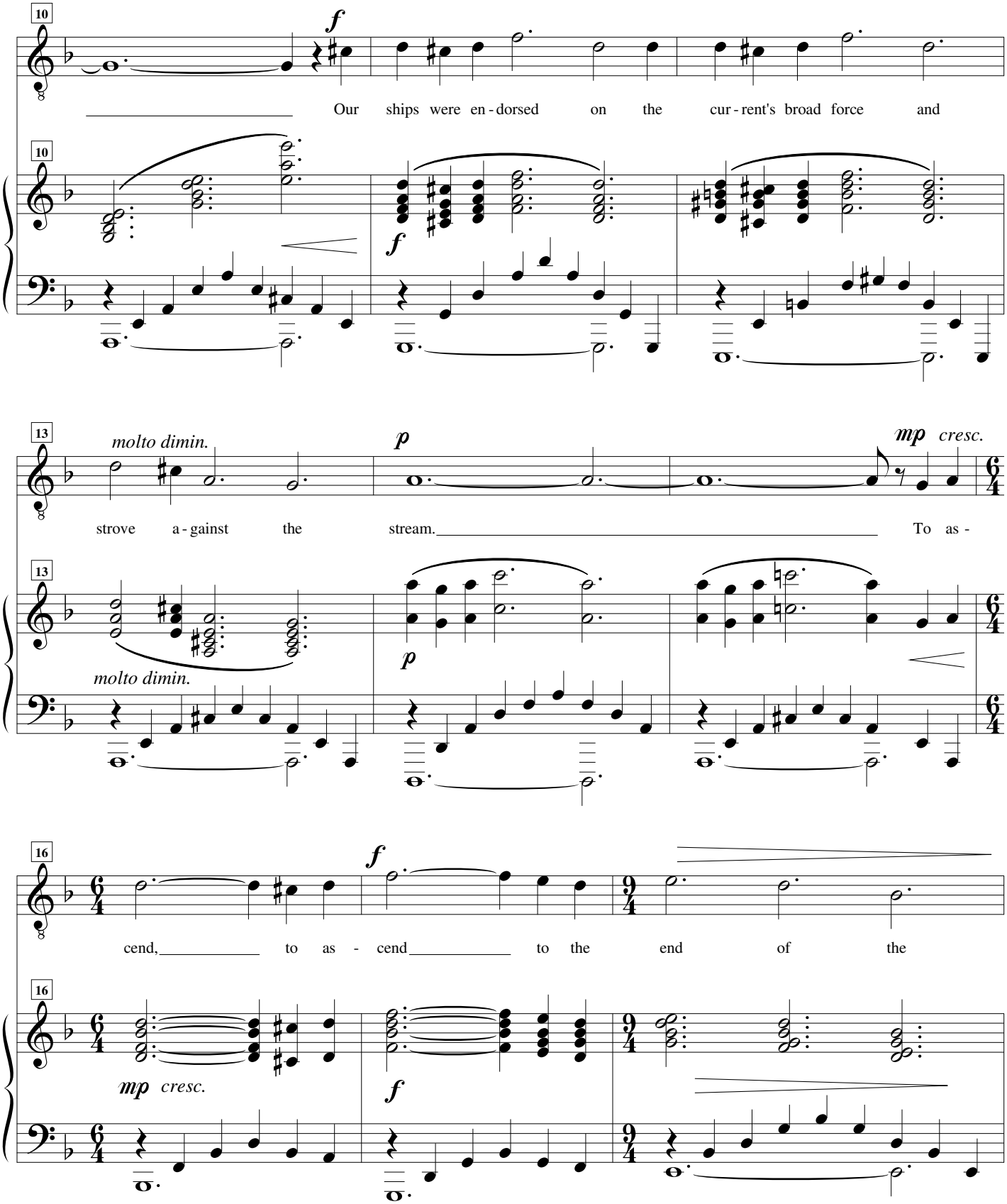

44
Main to Ten - nes - see. Come join our daunt - less Broth - er - hood, the Corps
44
49
poco rit.
of Dis - cov - er - y.
49
poco rit.
mf
54
Freely
mp
A crowd - ed keel - boat launched up - on the gen - tle brown Mis -
54
p
mp
58
rit.
mf
a tempo
cresc.
sou - ri. My youth - ful life I left be - hind, my des - ti - ny be -
58
rit.
a tempo
mf

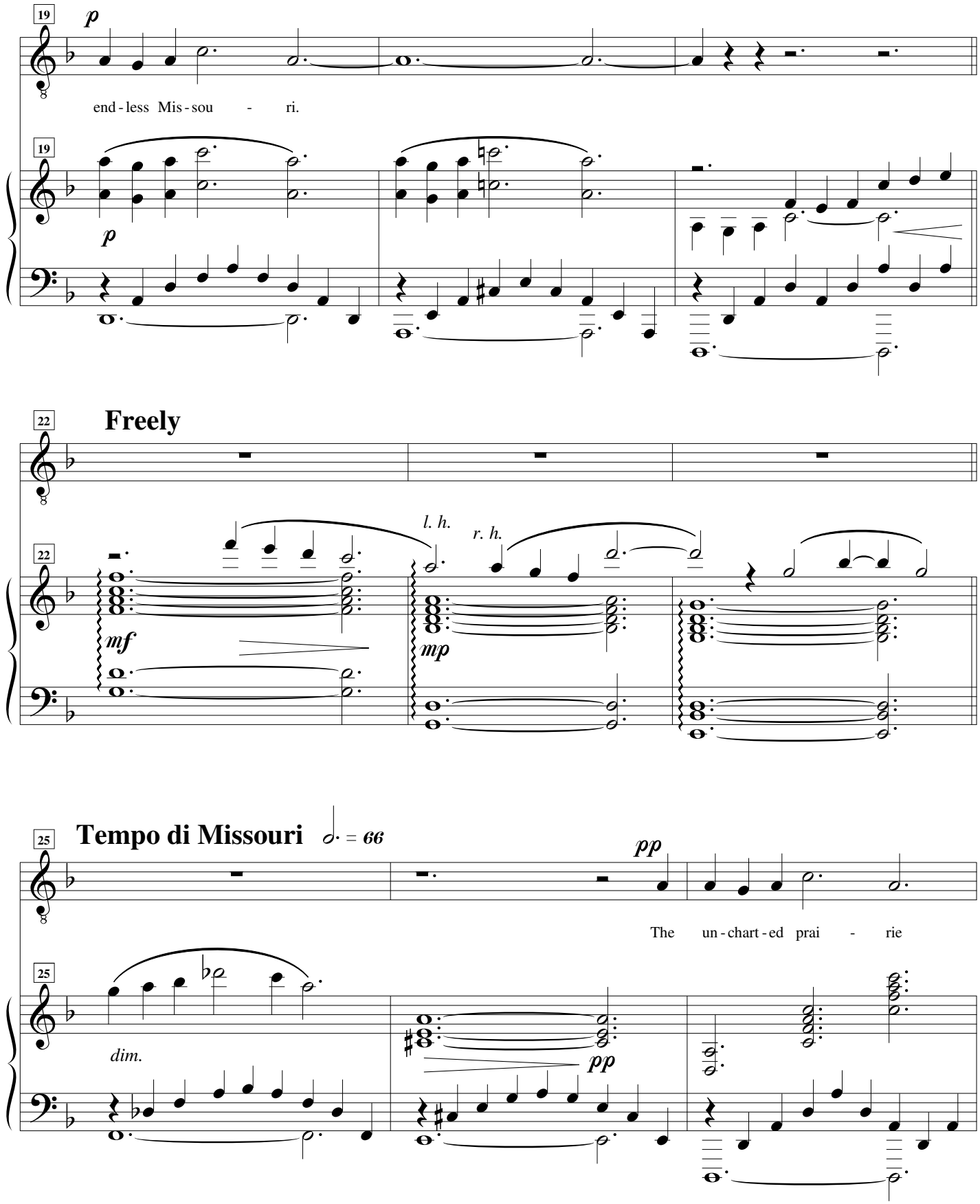

Rollicking ♩. = 88
62
f
mp
fore me. Through riv - er, prai - rie, field and wood, 'cross moun - tain to the Sea. We
Rollicking ♩. = 88
62
mp
67
cresc.
f
rit. e dim.
form our dar - ing Broth - er - hood: the Corps of Dis - cov - er - y.
67
cresc.
f
rit. e dim.
Grandly 𝅗𝅥 = 60
72
f
An em - pire calls us to be - gin our con - ti - nen - tal
72
mp
f

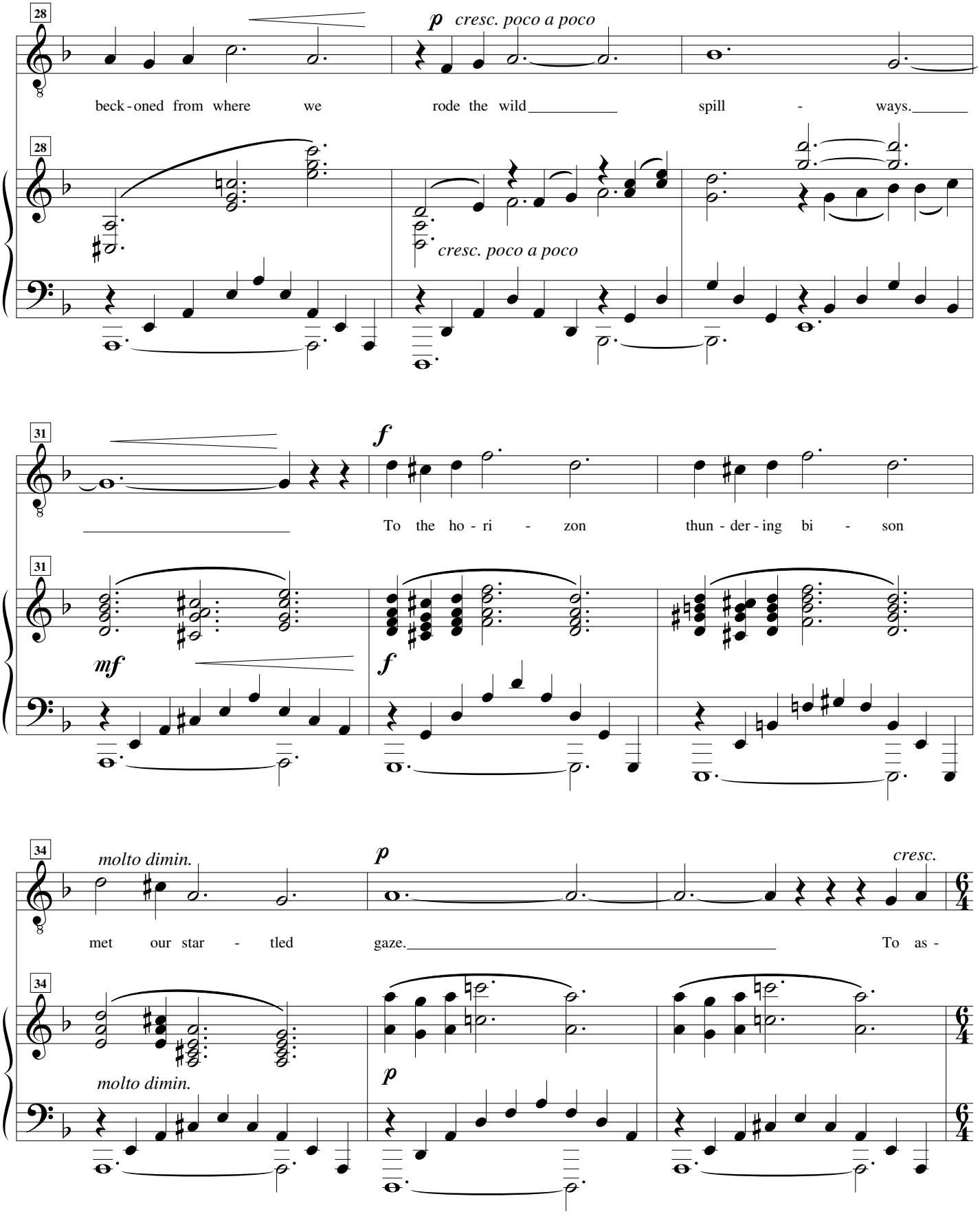

77
rit.
glor - y. From East to West and back a - gain the world shall know our
77
rit.
Majestically ♩. = 80
81
stor - y. I'll
81
86
poco allarg.
guide our no - ble Broth - er - hood, the Corps of Dis - cov - er - y.
86
poco allarg.

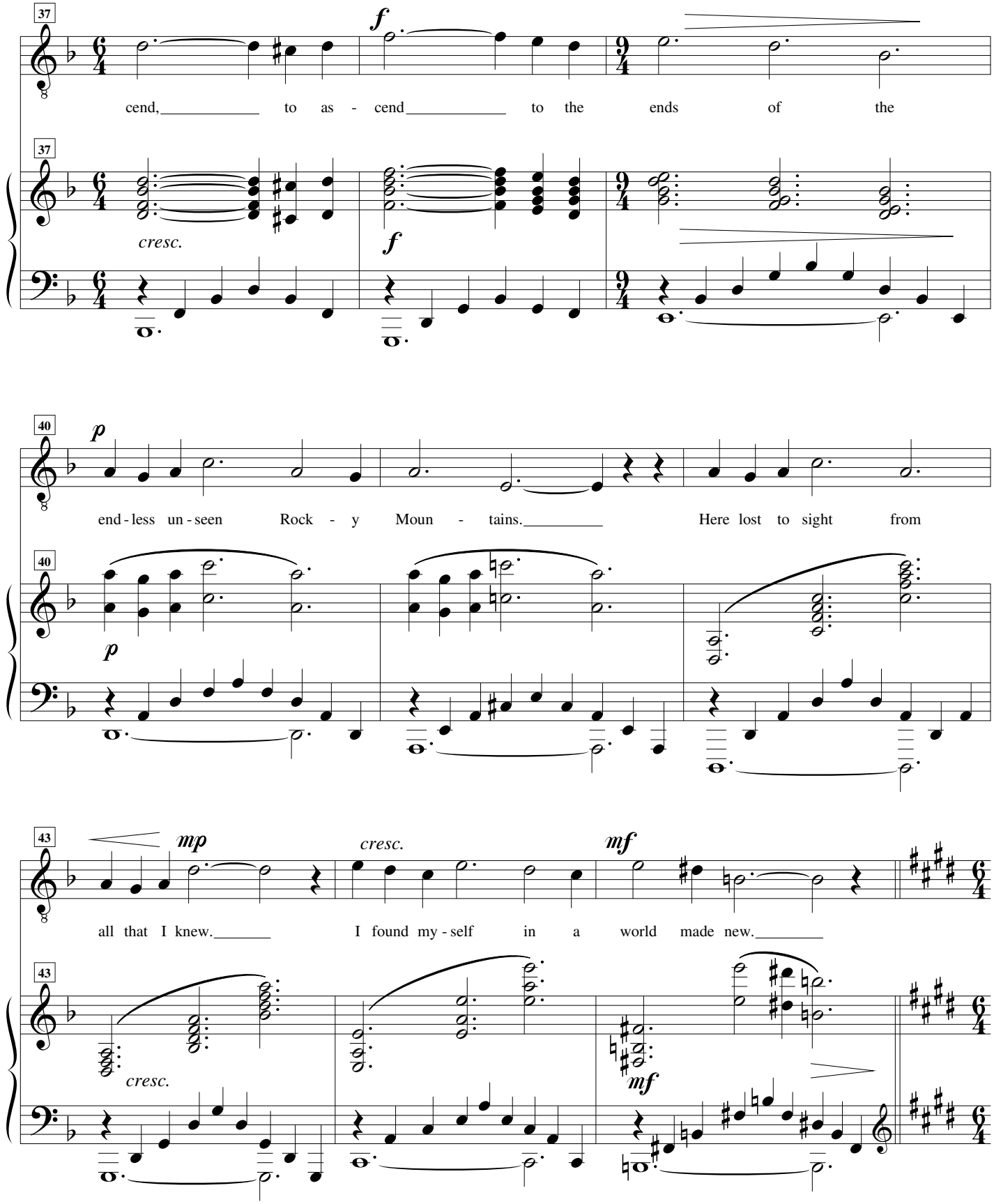
3. A New Eden

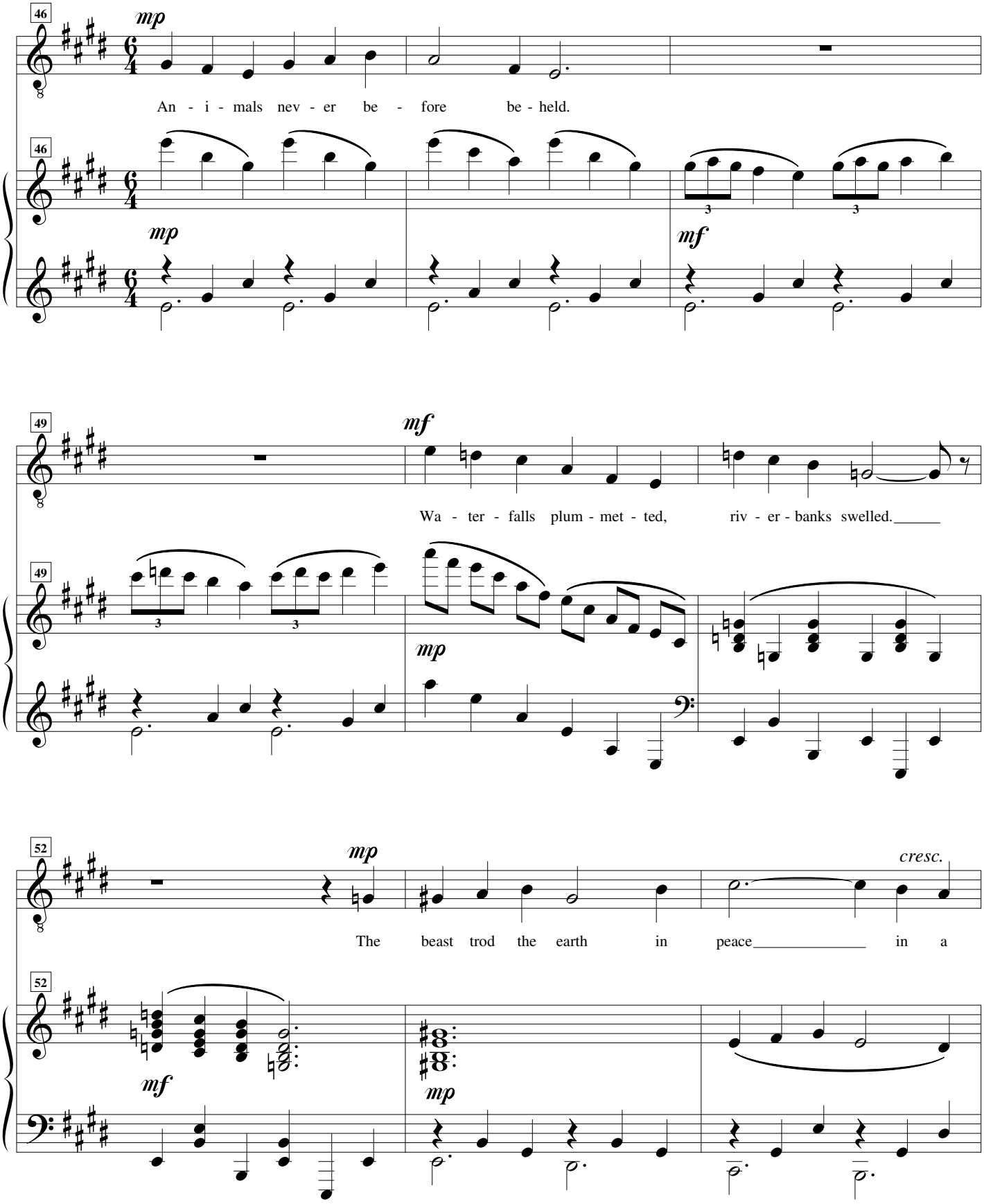

Freely ♩. = 60
l. h.
r. h.
p
con pedale
Tempo di Missouri ♩. = 66
pp
molto legato
The end - less Mis - sou - ri
pp
cresc. poco a poco
flowed in its glor - y
like a strong
brown
god,
cresc. poco a poco

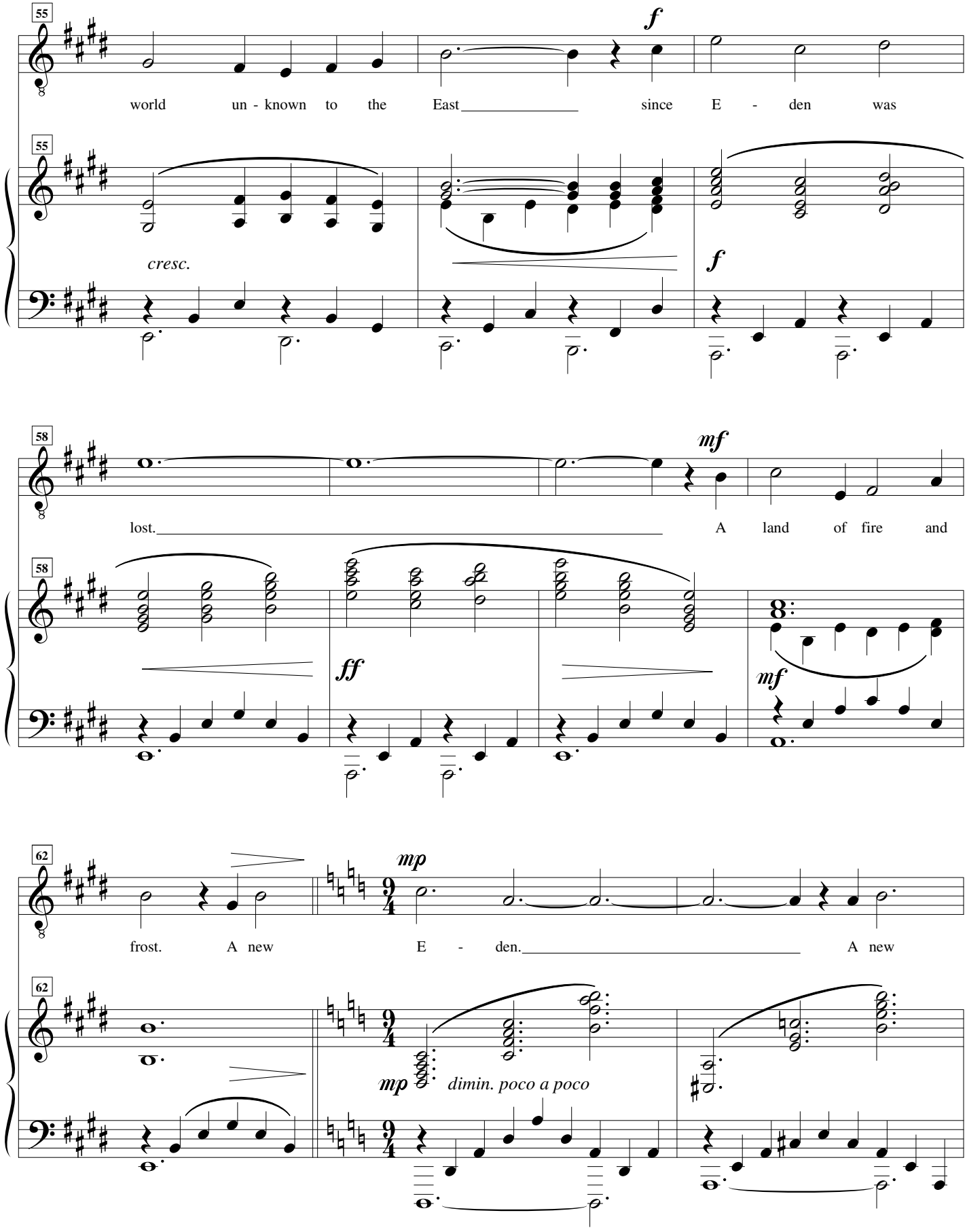

10
f
Our ships were en - dorsed on the cur - rent's broad force and
10
f
13
molto dimin.
p
mp cresc.
strove a - gainst the stream. To as -
13
molto dimin.
p
16
f
cend, to as - cend to the end of the
16
mp cresc.
f

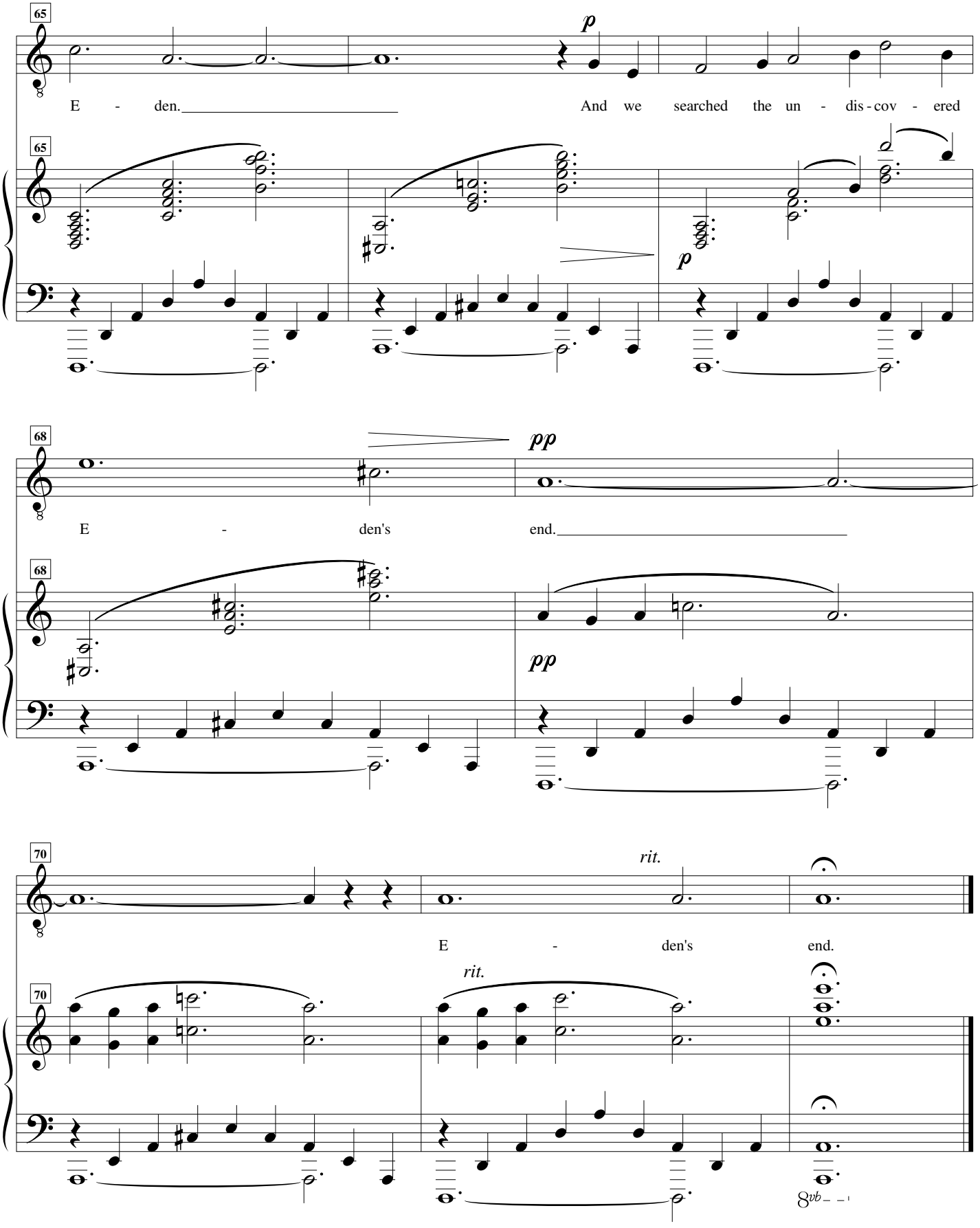

19
p
end - less Mis - sou - ri.
19
p
22
Freely
22
l. h.
r. h.
mf
mp
25
Tempo di Missouri
= 66
pp
The un - chart - ed prai - rie
25
dim.
pp


28
p cresc. poco a poco
beck - oned from where we rode the wild spill - ways.
28
cresc. poco a poco
31
f
To the ho - ri - zon thun - der - ing bi - son
31
mf
f
34
molto dimin.
p
cresc.
met our star - tled gaze. To as -
34
molto dimin.
p

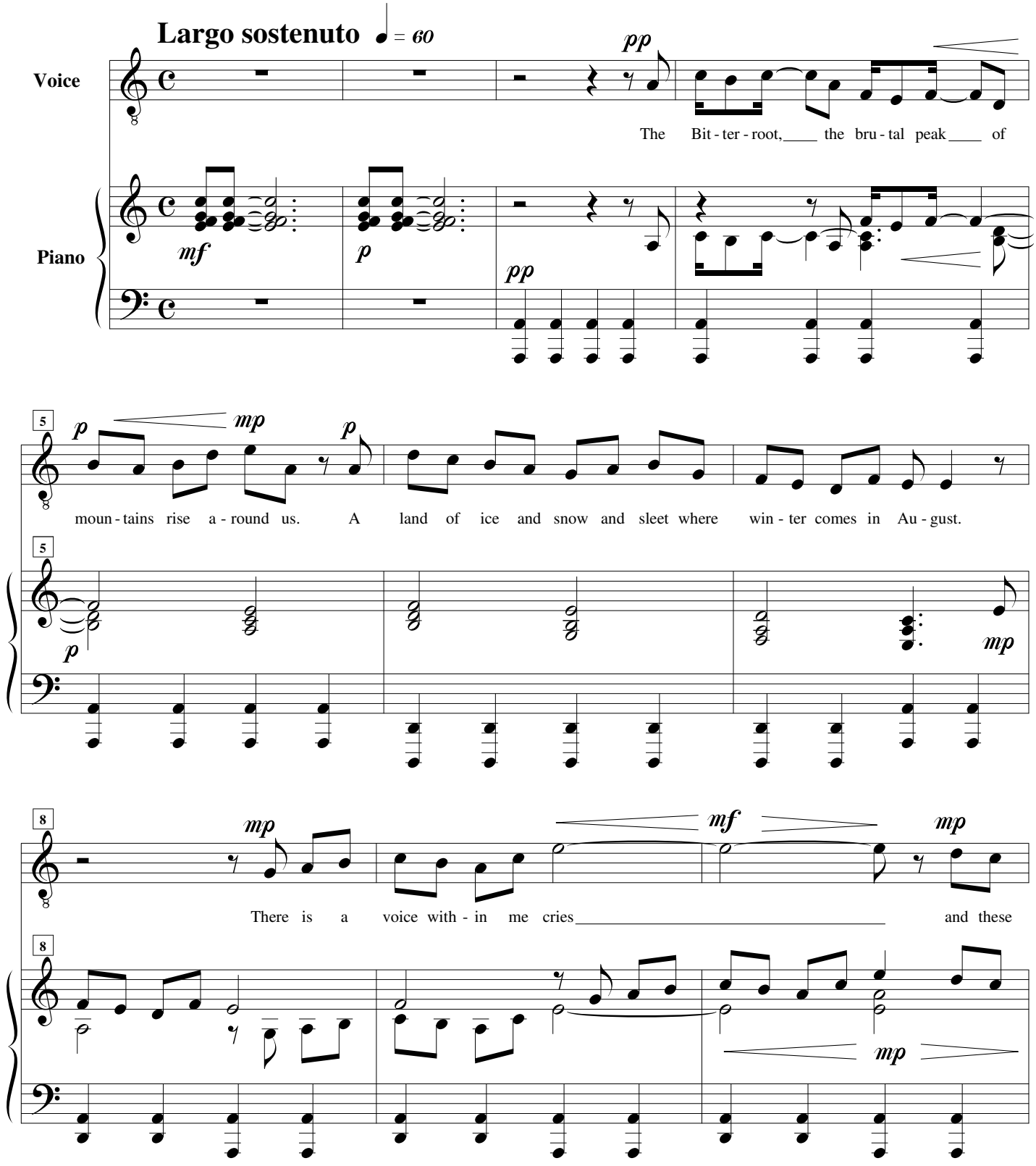

37
f
cend, to as - cend to the ends of the
37
cresc.
f
40
p
end - less un - seen Rock - y Moun - tains. Here lost to sight from
40
p
43
mp
cresc.
mf
all that I knew. I found my - self in a world made new.
43
cresc.
mf

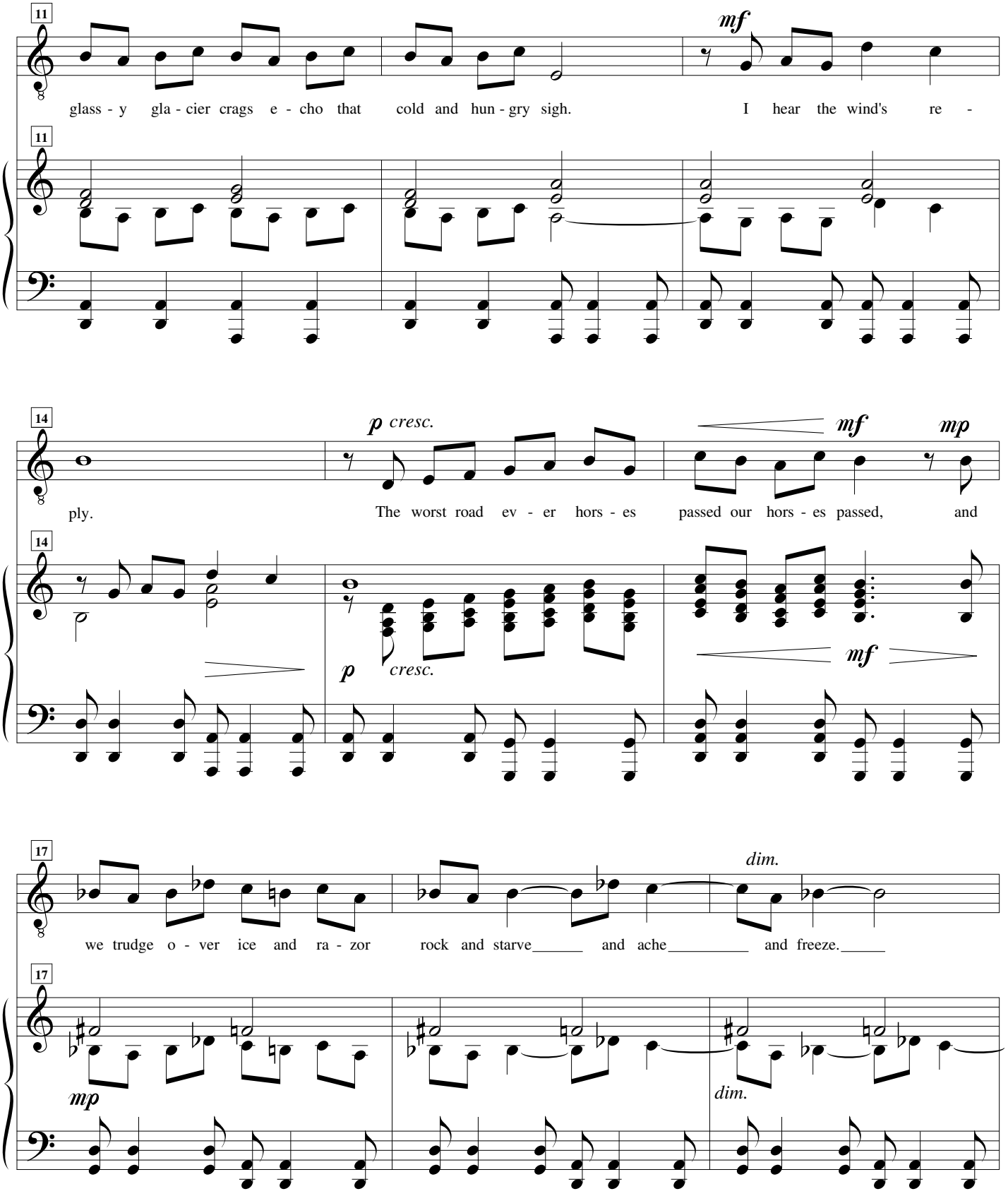

46
mp
An - i - mals nev - er be - fore be - held.
46
mp
mf
49
mf
Wa - ter - falls plum - met - ted, riv - er - banks swelled.
49
mp
52
mp
cresc.
The beast trod the earth in peace in a
52
mf
mp

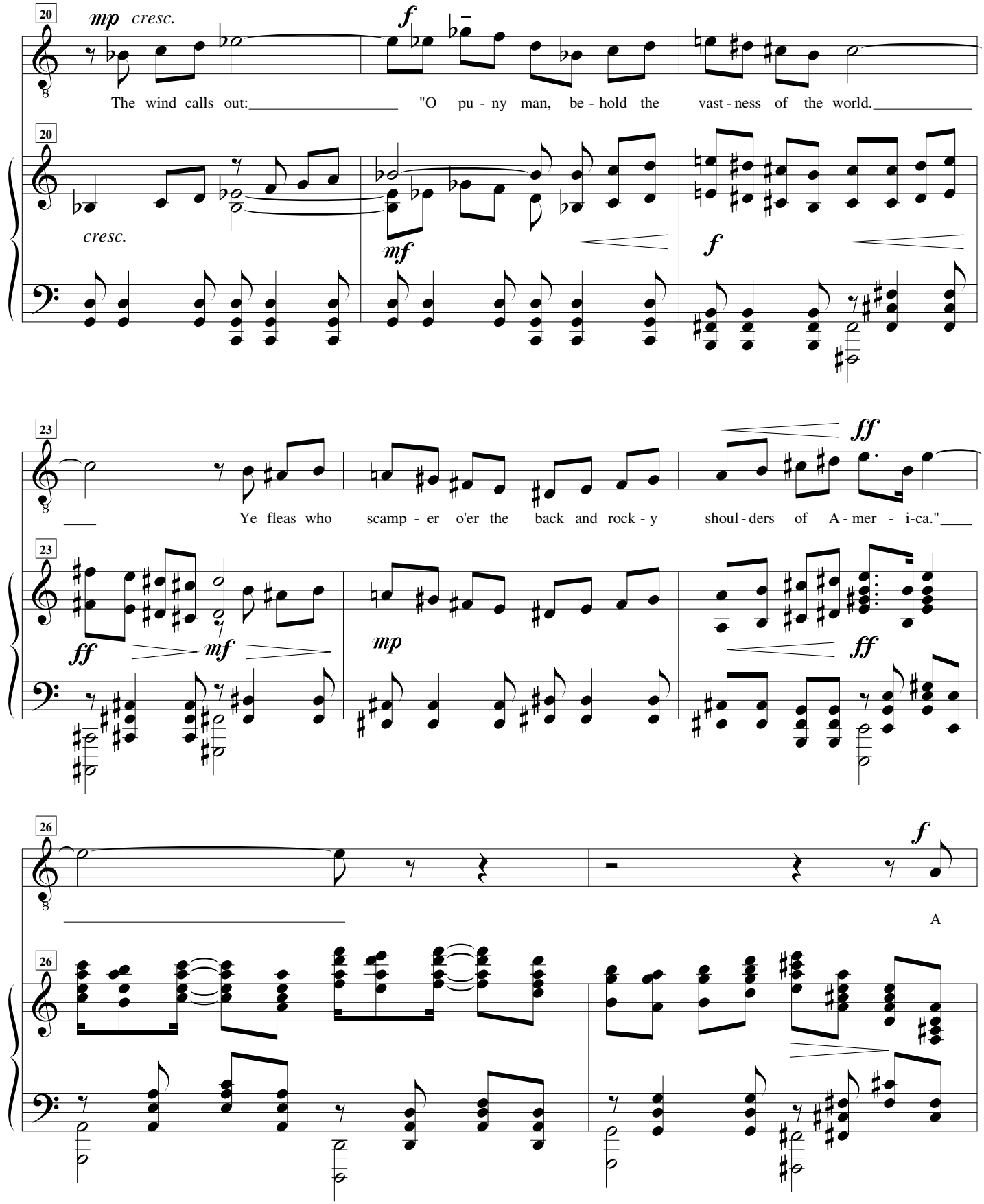

55
f
world un - known to the East since E - den was
cresc.
f
58
mf
lost. A land of fire and
ff
mf
62
mp
frost. A new E - den. A new
mp
dimin. poco a poco

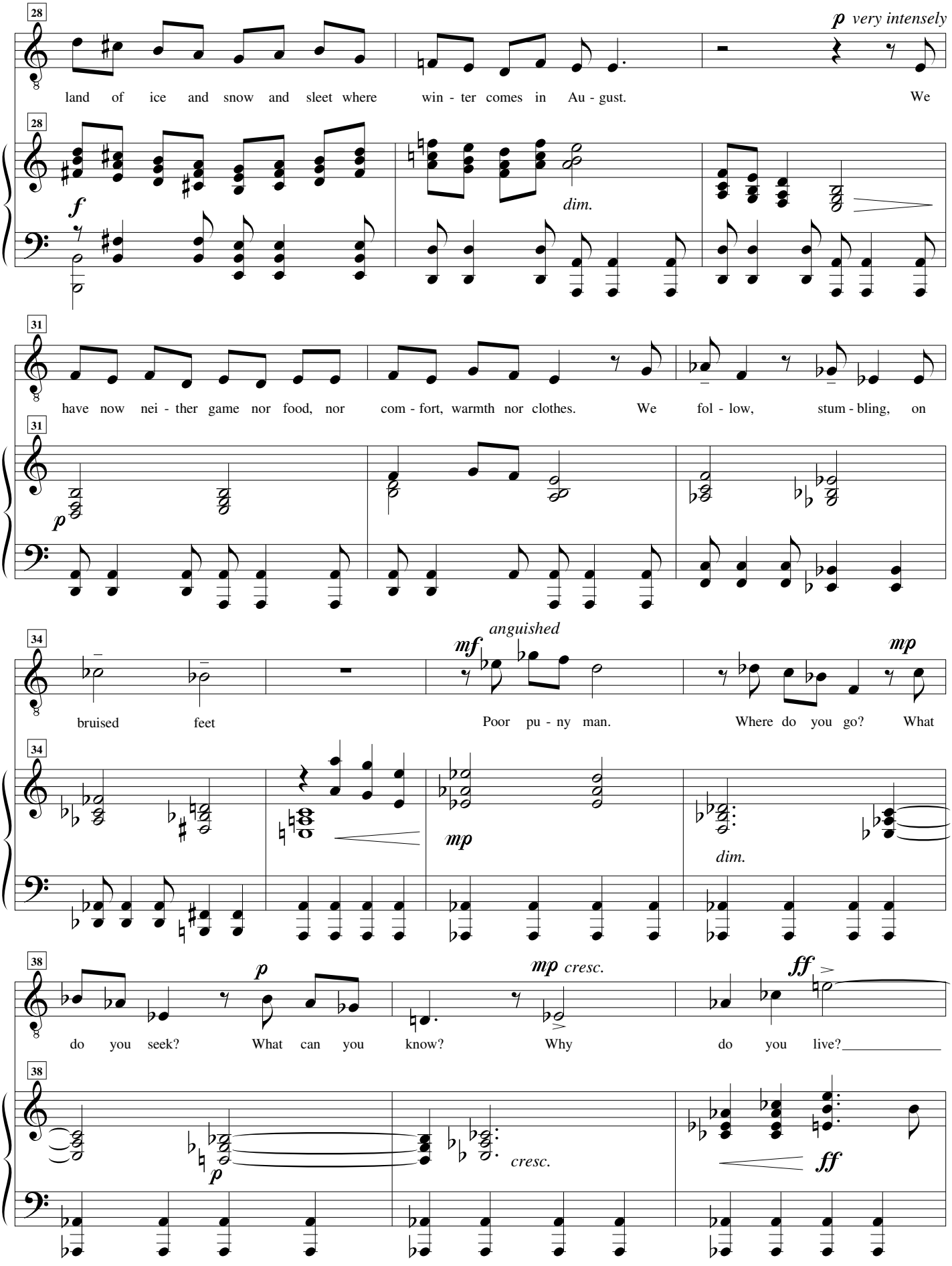

65
p
E - den.
And we searched the un - dis - cov - ered
65
p
68
pp
E - den's end.
68
pp
70
rit.
E - den's end.
rit.
70
8vb

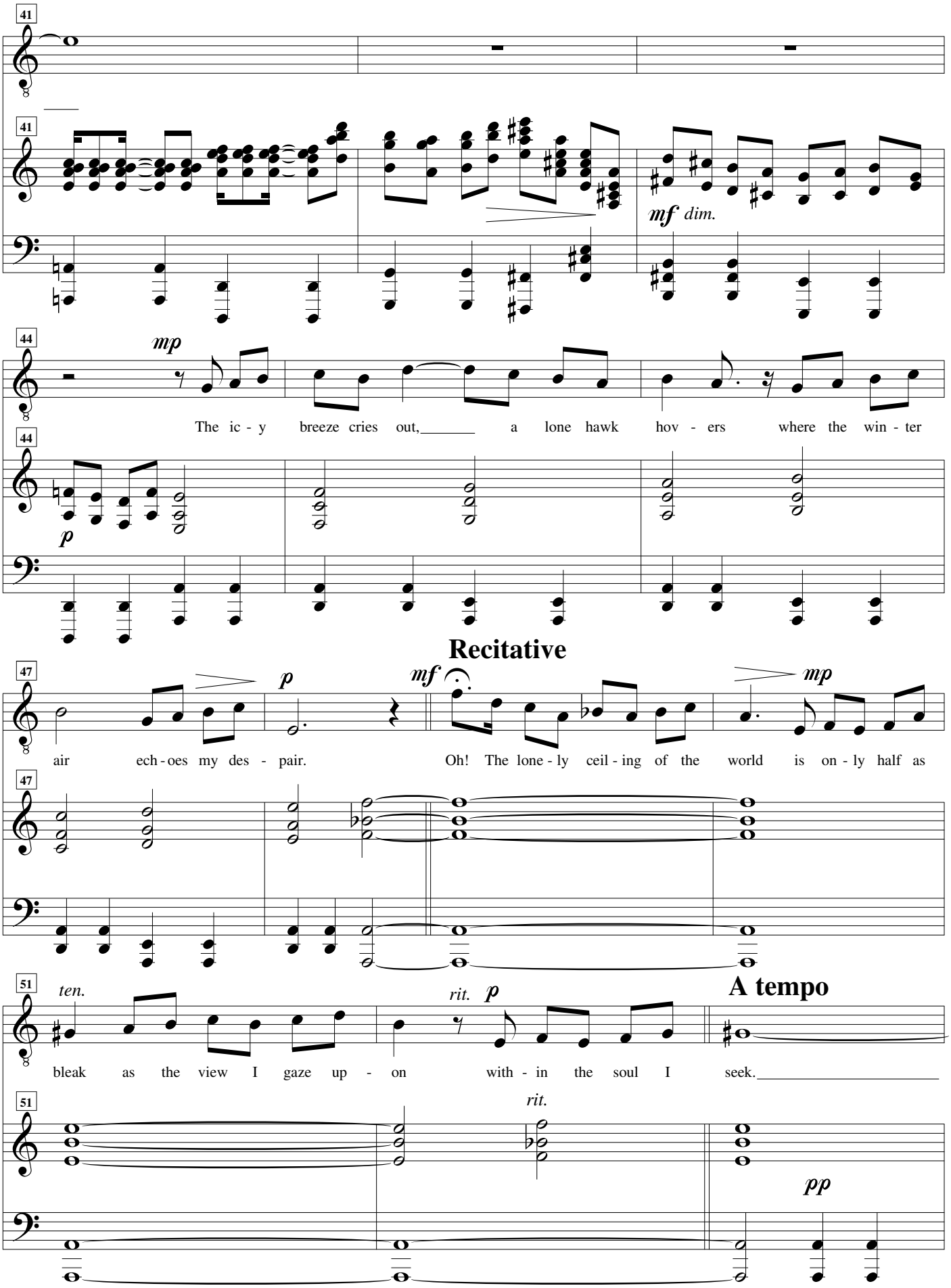
4. Bitterroot

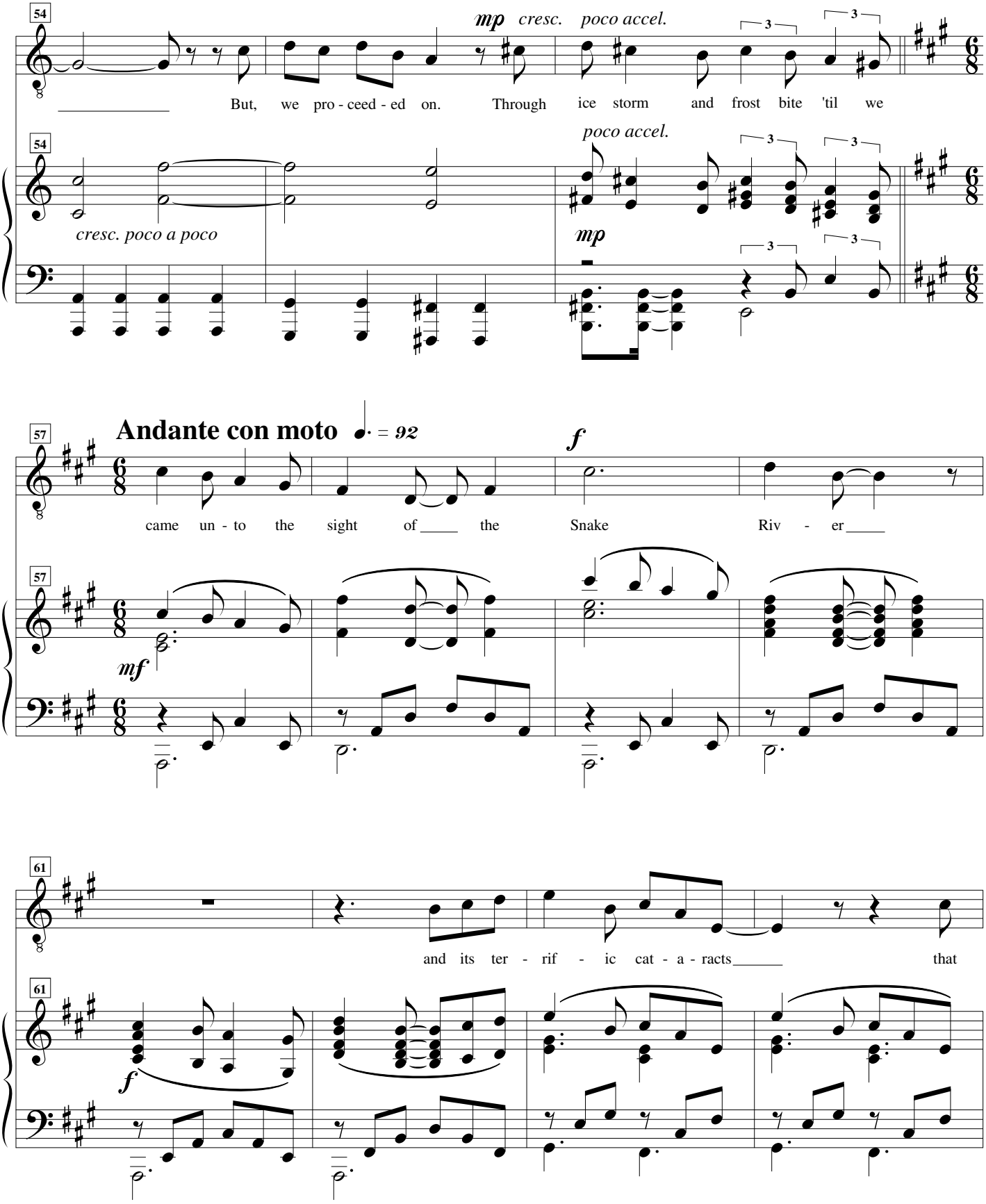


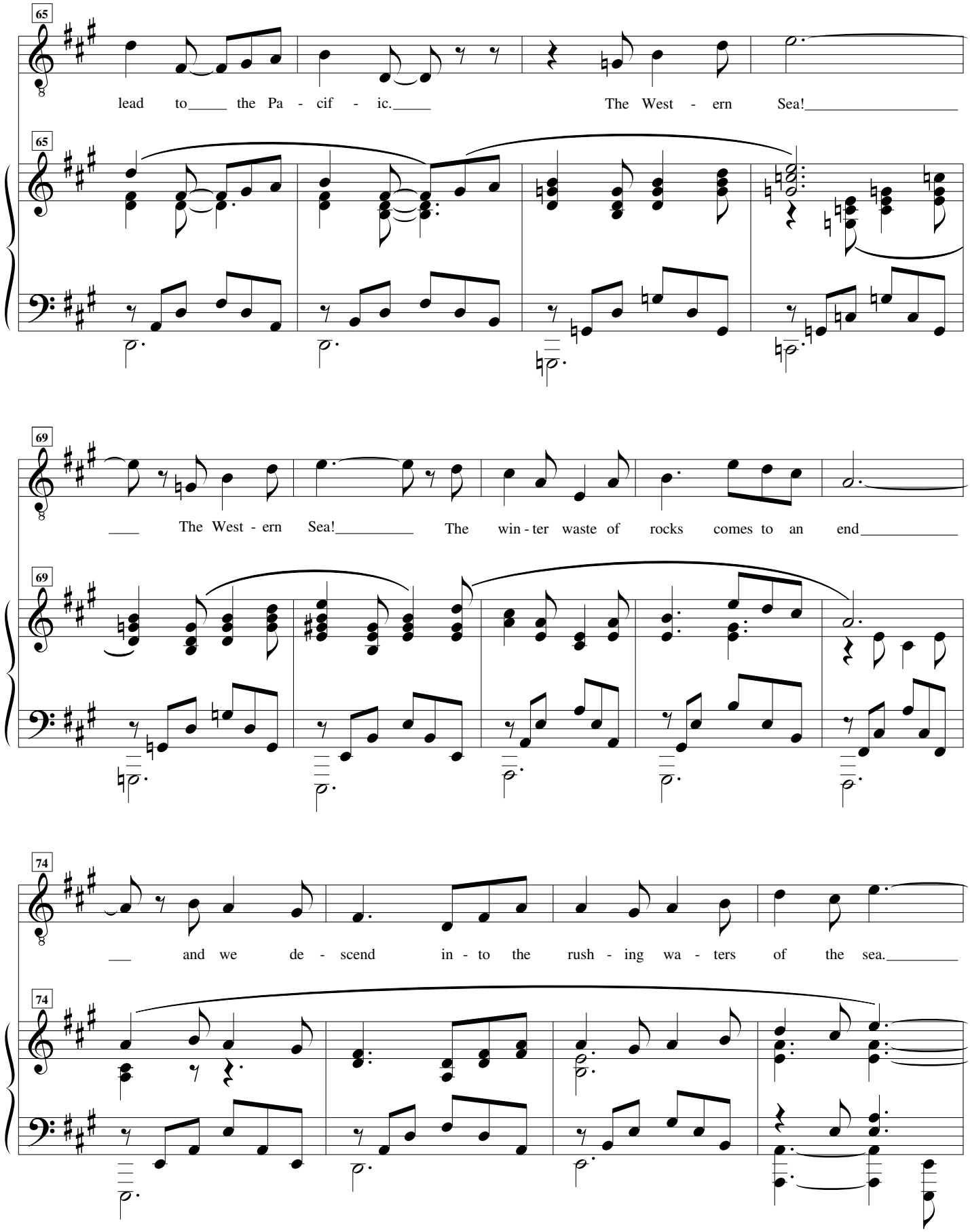

11
glass - y gla - cier crags e - cho that cold and hun - gry sigh.
mf
I hear the wind's re -
11
14
ply.
p cresc.
The worst road ev - er hors - es
mf
mp
passed our hors - es passed, and
14
p cresc.
mf
17
we trudge o - ver ice and ra - zor rock and starve and ache and freeze.
dim.
17
mp
dim.

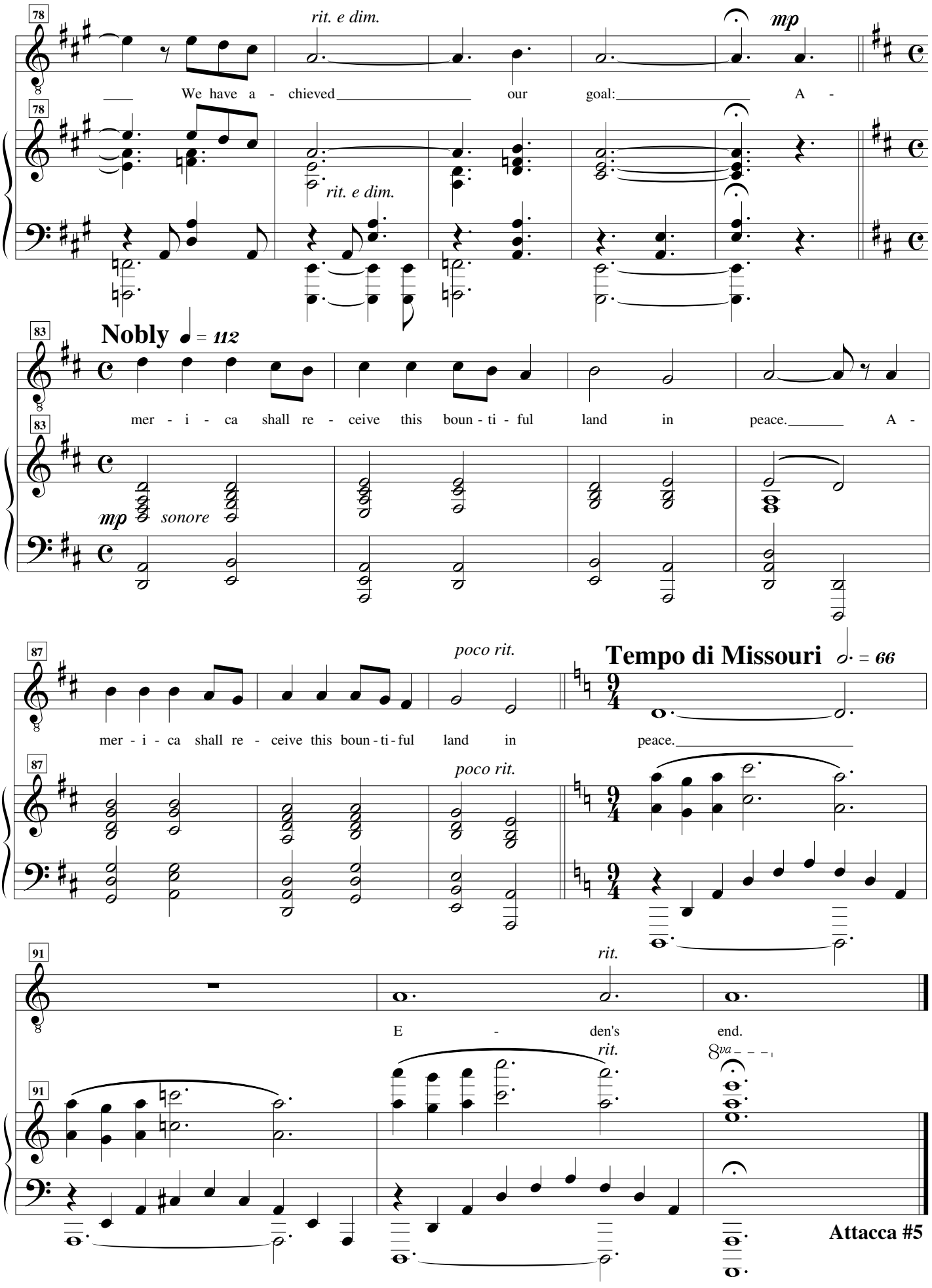

20
mp cresc.
f
The wind calls out: "O pu - ny man, be - hold the vast - ness of the world.
cresc.
mf
f
23
ff
Ye fleas who scamp - er o'er the back and rock - y shoul - ders of A - mer - i-ca."
ff mf
mp
ff
26
f
A


28
p very intensely
land of ice and snow and sleet where win - ter comes in Au - gust. We
28
f
dim.
31
have now nei - ther game nor food, nor com - fort, warmth nor clothes. We fol - low, stum - bling, on
31
p
34
anguished
mf
mp
bruised feet Poor pu - ny man. Where do you go? What
34
mp
dim.
38
p
mp cresc.
ff
do you seek? What can you know? Why do you live?
38
p
cresc.
ff

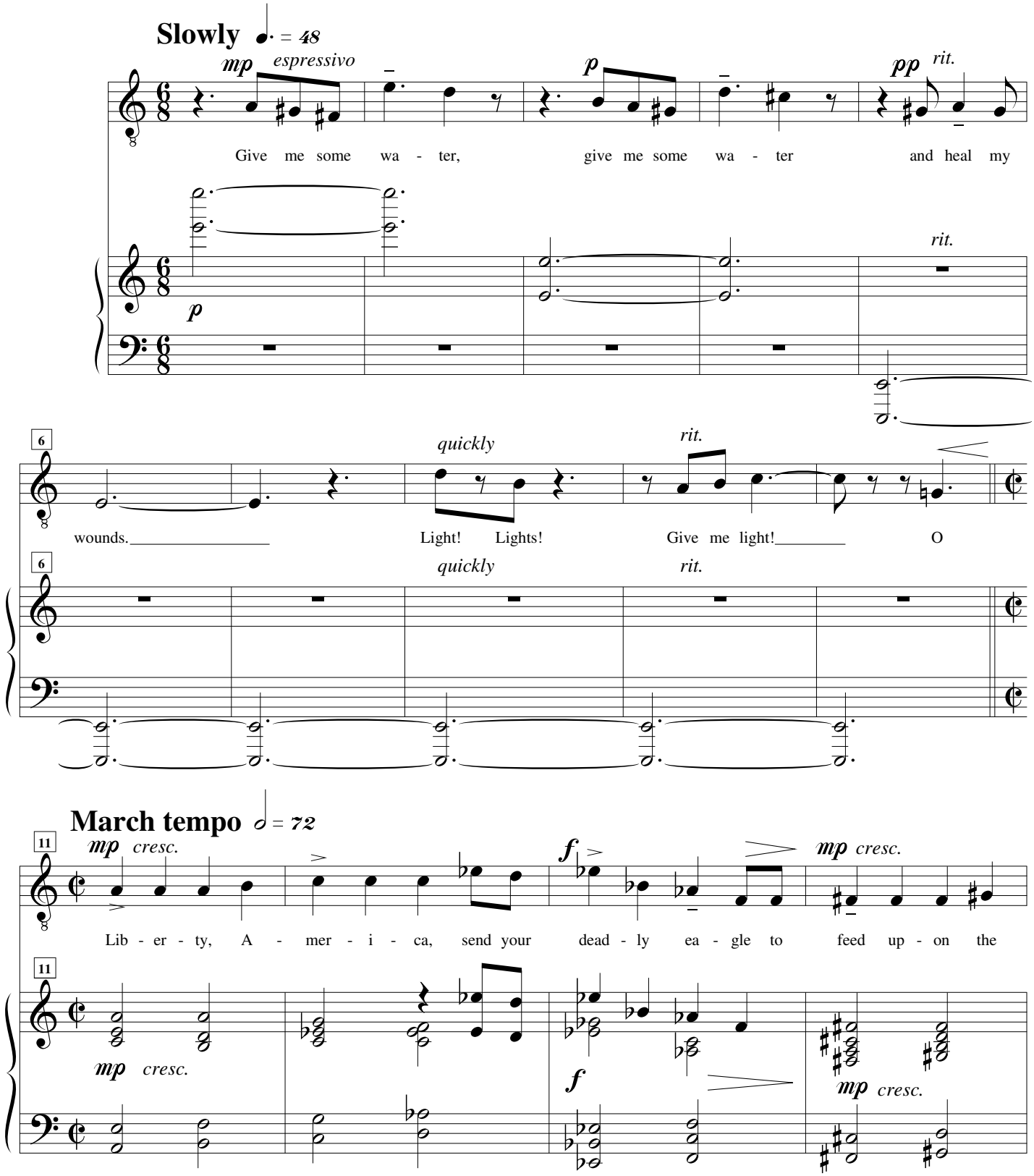

41
41
mf dim.
44
mp
The ic - y breeze cries out, a lone hawk hov - ers where the win - ter
44
p
Recitative
47
p
mf
mp
air ech - oes my des - pair. Oh! The lone - ly ceil - ing of the world is on - ly half as
47
51
ten.
rit.
p
A tempo
bleak as the view I gaze up - on with - in the soul I seek.
51
rit.
pp

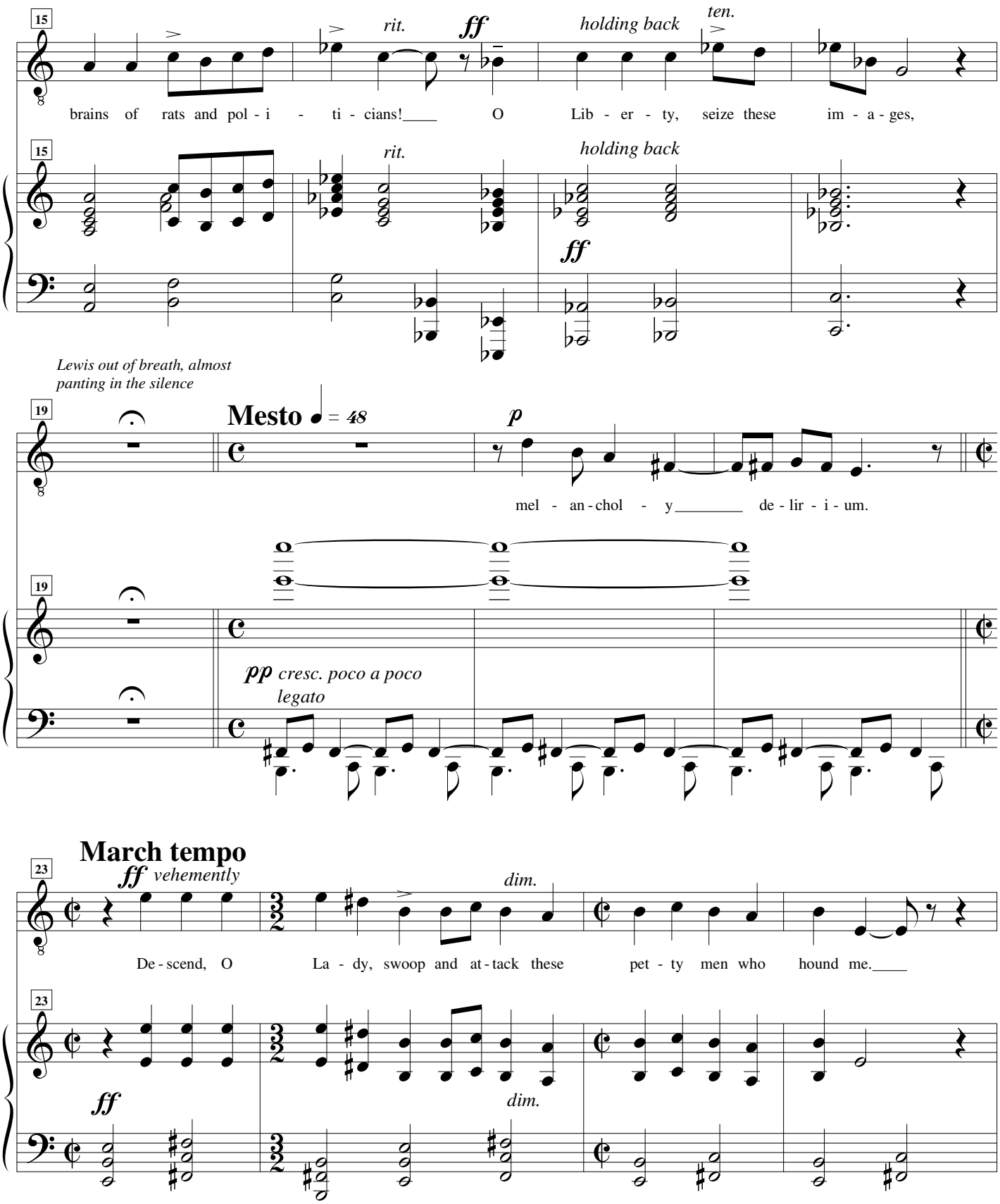

54
mp cresc. poco accel.
But, we pro - ceed - ed on. Through ice storm and frost bite 'til we
cresc. poco a poco
poco accel.
mp
Andante con moto ♩. = 92
57
f
came un - to the sight of the Snake Riv - er
mf
61
and its ter - rif - ic cat - a - racts that
f

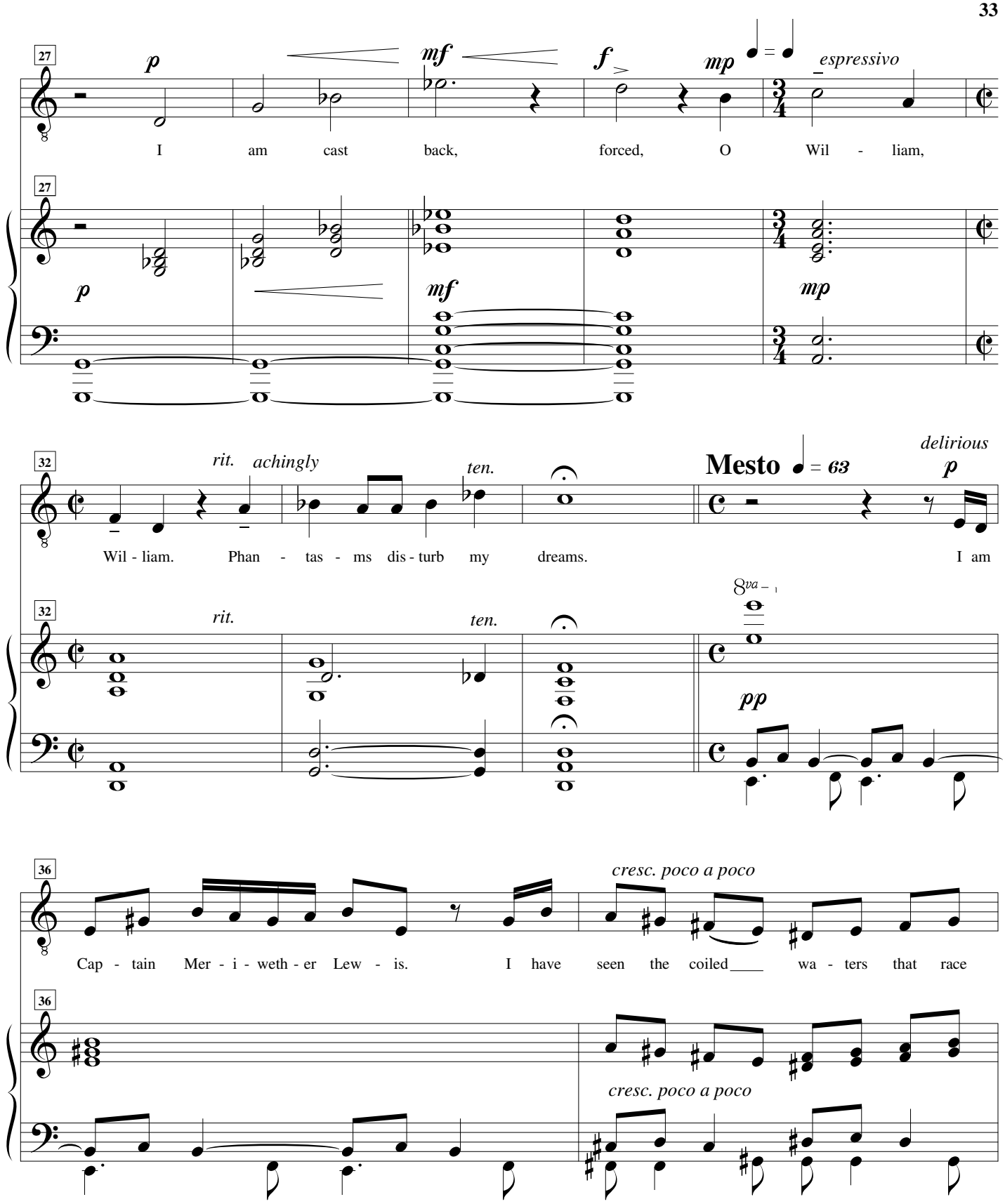

65
lead to the Pa - cif - ic.
The West - ern Sea!
65
69
The West - ern Sea!
The win - ter waste of rocks comes to an end
69
74
and we de - scend in - to the rush - ing wa - ters of the sea.
74

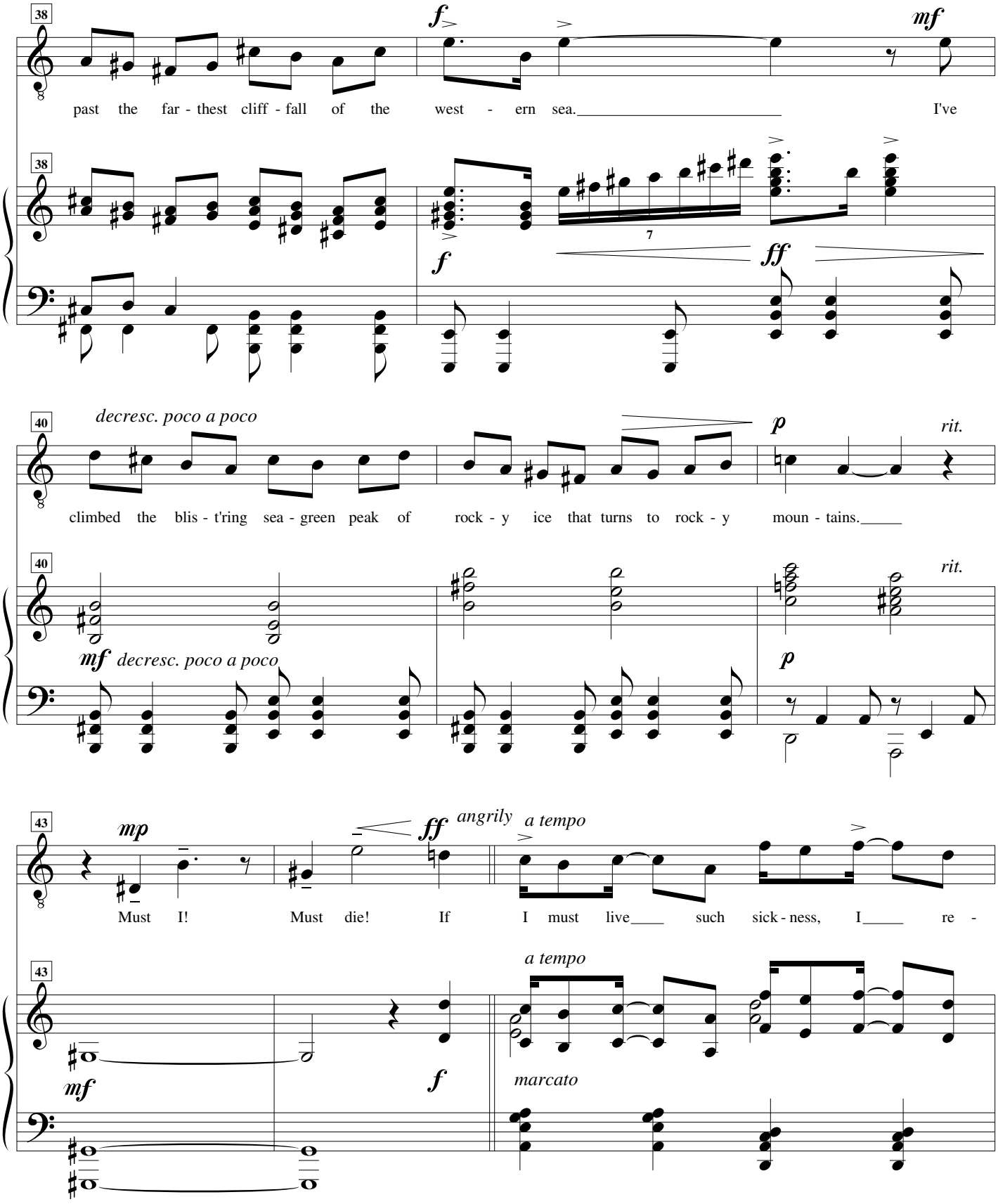

78
rit. e dim.
mp
We have a - chieved our goal: A -
78
rit. e dim.
83
Nobly ♩ = 112
mer - i - ca shall re - ceive this boun - ti - ful land in peace. A -
83
mp sonore
87
poco rit.
Tempo di Missouri 𝅗𝅥. = 66
mer - i - ca shall re - ceive this boun - ti - ful land in peace.
87
poco rit.
91
rit.
E - den's end.
rit.
8va
91
Attacca #5

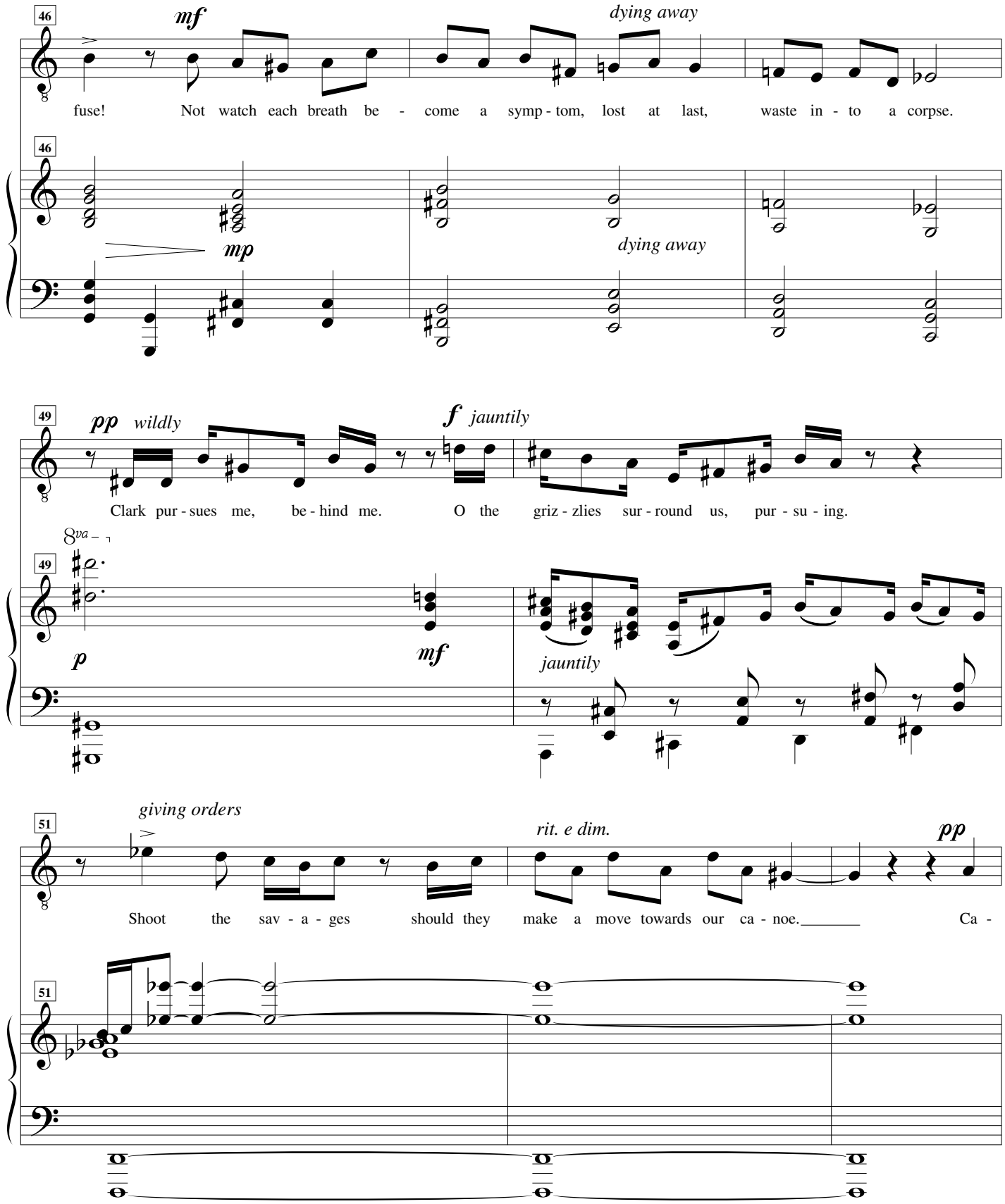
5. First Light

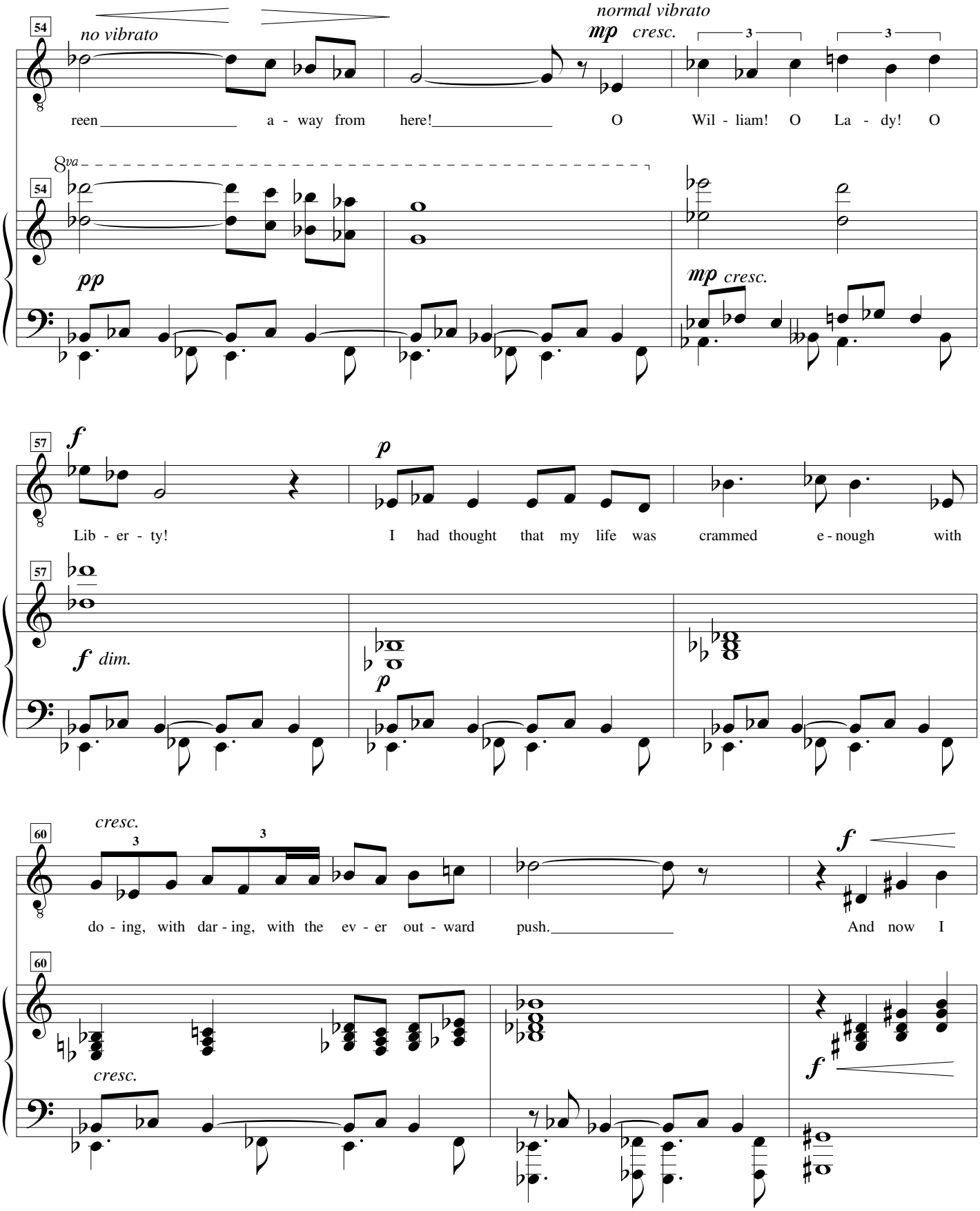


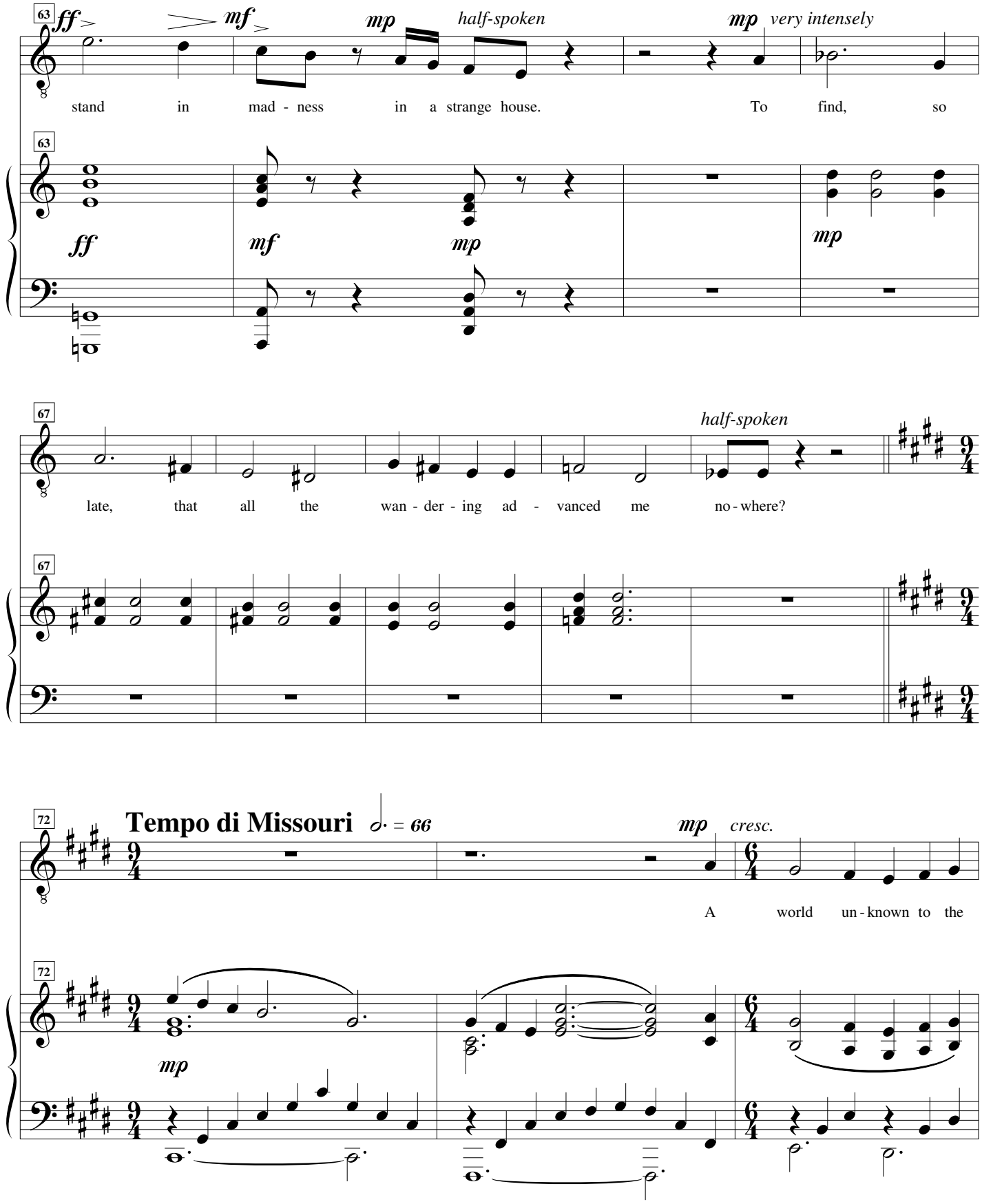

15
rit.
ff
holding back
ten.
brains of rats and pol - i - ti - cians!___ O Lib - er - ty, seize these im - a - ges,
15
rit.
holding back
ff
Lewis out of breath, almost panting in the silence
19
Mesto ♩ = 48
p
mel - an - chol - y_____ de - lir - i - um.
19
pp cresc. poco a poco
legato
March tempo
23
ff vehemently
dim.
De - scend, O La - dy, swoop and at - tack these pet - ty men who hound me.____
23
ff
dim.

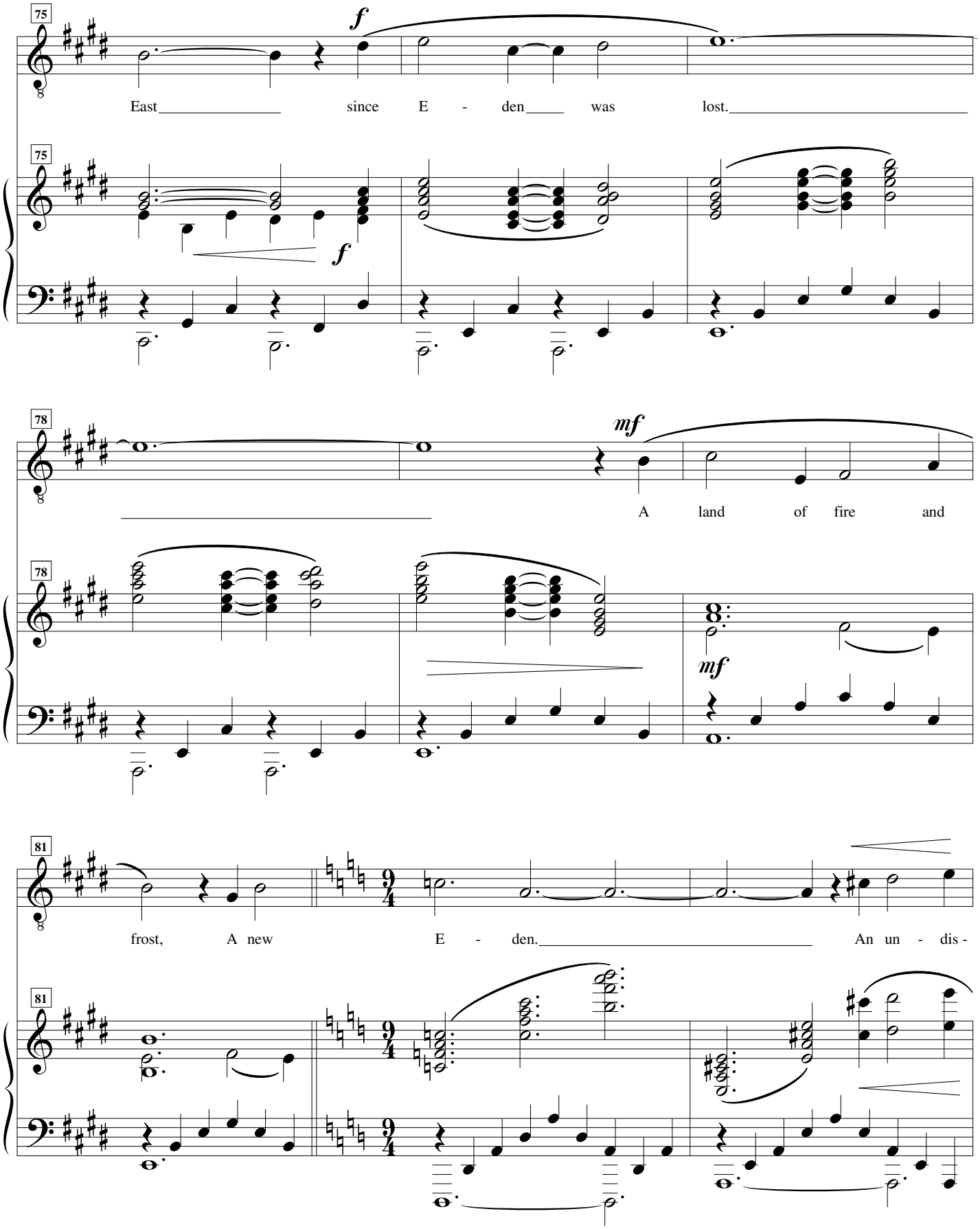

27
p
mf
f
mp
espressivo
I am cast back, forced, O Wil - liam,
27
p
mf
mp
32
rit.
achingly
ten.
Mesto
delirious
p
Wil - liam. Phan - tas - ms dis - turb my dreams. I am
32
rit.
ten.
8va
pp
36
cresc. poco a poco
Cap - tain Mer - i - weth - er Lew - is. I have seen the coiled wa - ters that race
36
cresc. poco a poco

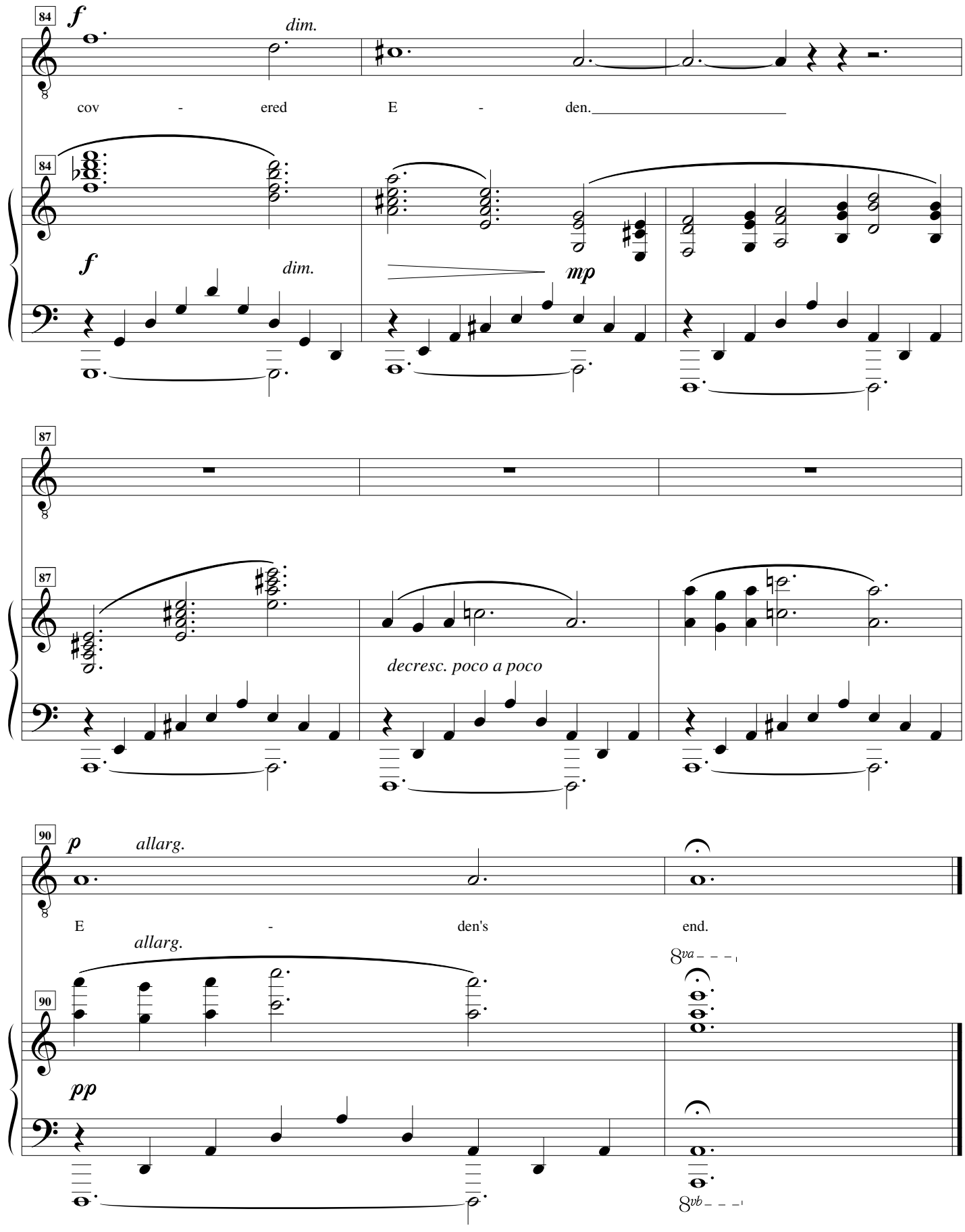

38
f
mf
past the far - thest cliff - fall of the west - ern sea.
I've
38
7
f
ff
40
decresc. poco a poco
p
rit.
climbed the blis - t'ring sea - green peak of rock - y ice that turns to rock - y moun - tains.
40
rit.
mf
decresc. poco a poco
p
43
mp
ff
angrily
a tempo
Must I! Must die! If I must live
such sick - ness, I
re -
43
a tempo
mf
f
marcato


46
mf
dying away
fuse! Not watch each breath be - come a symp - tom, lost at last, waste in - to a corpse.
46
mp
dying away
49
pp wildly
f jauntily
Clark pur - sues me, be - hind me. O the griz - zlies sur - round us, pur - su - ing.
8va
49
p
mf
jauntily
51
giving orders
rit. e dim.
pp
Shoot the sav - a - ges should they make a move towards our ca - noe. Ca -
51


54
no vibrato
normal vibrato
mp cresc.
reen a - way from here! O Wil - liam! O La - dy! O
8va
pp
mp cresc.
57
f
p
Lib - er - ty! I had thought that my life was crammed e - nough with
f dim.
p
60
cresc.
do - ing, with dar - ing, with the ev - er out - ward push. And now I
cresc.
f
f


63
ff
mf
mp
half-spoken
mp
very intensely
stand in mad - ness in a strange house. To find, so
63
ff
mf
mp
mp
67
half-spoken
late, that all the wan - der - ing ad - vanced me no - where?
67
72
Tempo di Missouri
mp
cresc.
A world un - known to the
72
mp


75
f
East since E - den was lost.
75
f
78
mf
A land of fire and
78
mf
81
frost, A new E - den. An un - dis -
81


84
f
dim.
cov - ered E - den.
84
f
dim.
mp
87
87
decresc. poco a poco
90
p
allarg.
E - den's end.
allarg.
90
pp
8va
8vb