In Praise of Darkness

for mezzo-soprano and piano

text by Kathleen Norris

music by Joel Matthys

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The pianist should play in strict tempo, taking care not to accent the beginning of the patterns. Phrases between repeat signs are played an unspecified number of times, in tandem with the voice. Crescendos and decrescendos extend over the duration of a pattern.

The vocal line is sung unhurriedly, in the natural rhythms of speech, without reference to the pianists pulse. Open noteheads indicate notes that are somewhat longer than those with closed noteheads, but their exact durations are at the singer's discretion. Accidentals do not carry through a phrase, but apply to individual notes only.

“In Praise of Darkness” originally appeared in *Little Girls in Church* by Kathleen Norris. Published in © 1995 by the University of Pittsburgh Press. Used and performed by permission of the publisher.

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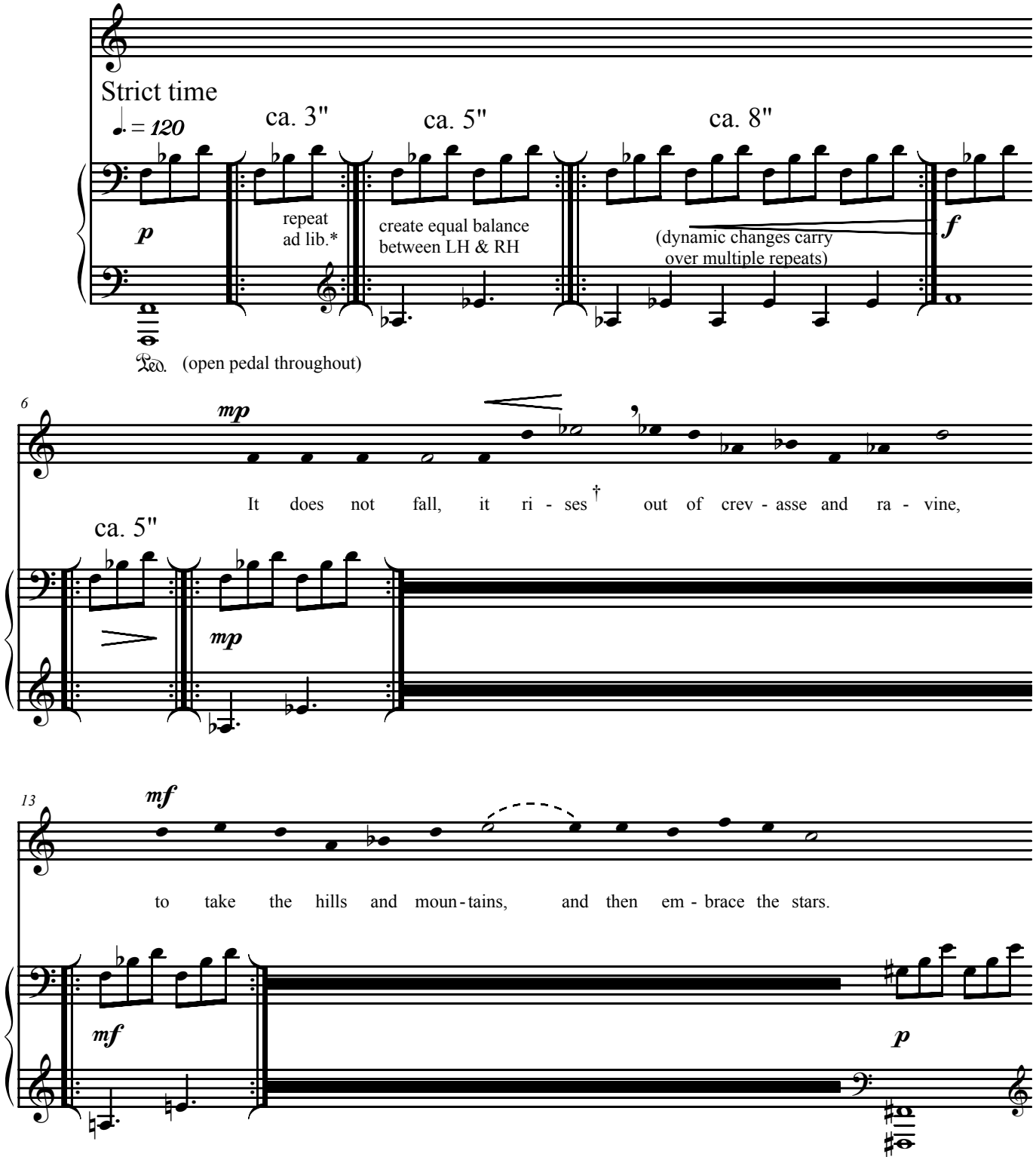

* All repeats are to be taken multiple times, at the performer's discretion. Each event in the piano part continues without interruption until the next event.

† Vocal line is sung unhurriedly, in the natural rhythms of speech. Melody should run concurrently with piano events but should not synchronize with the rhythm of the piano part.

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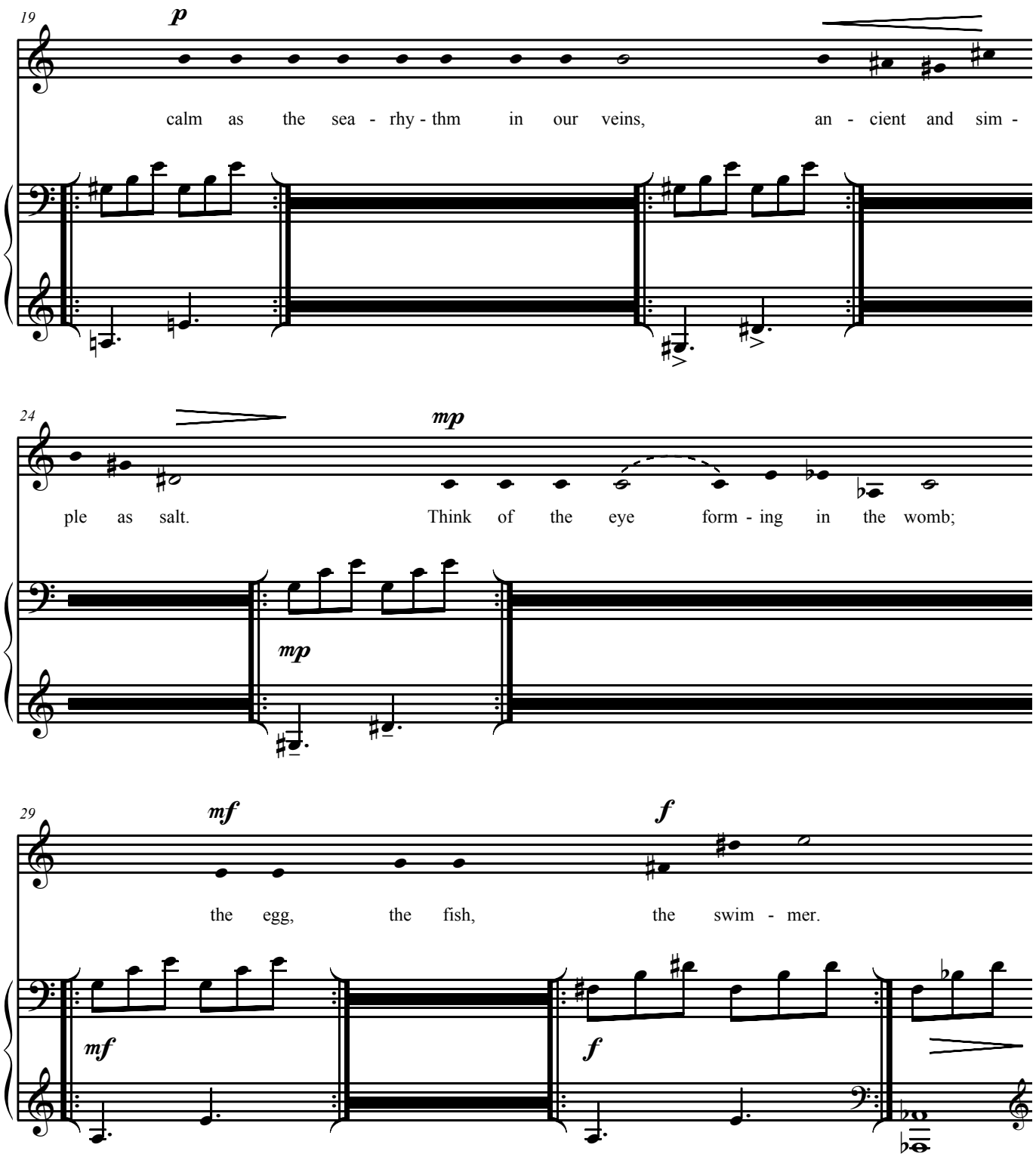
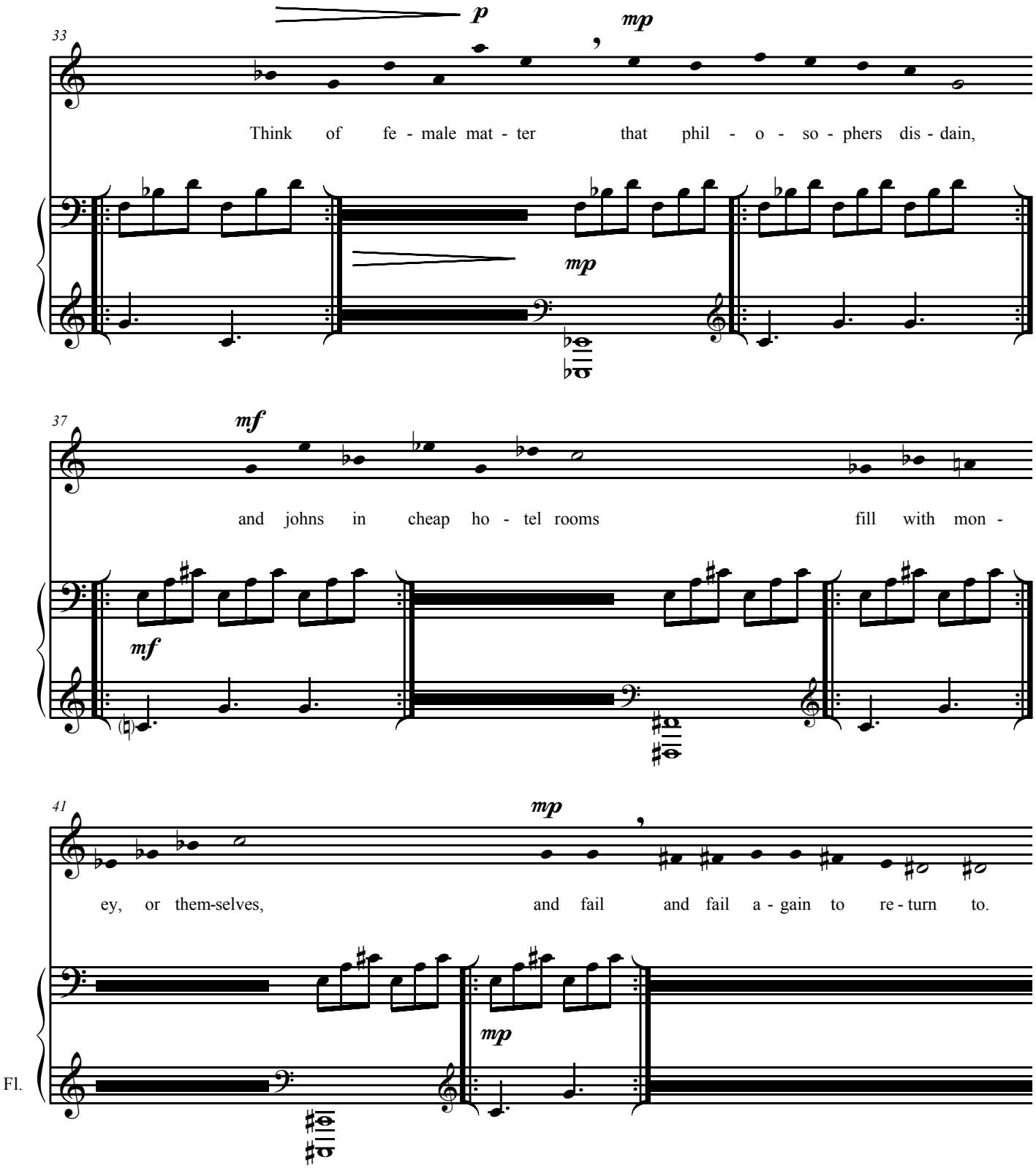
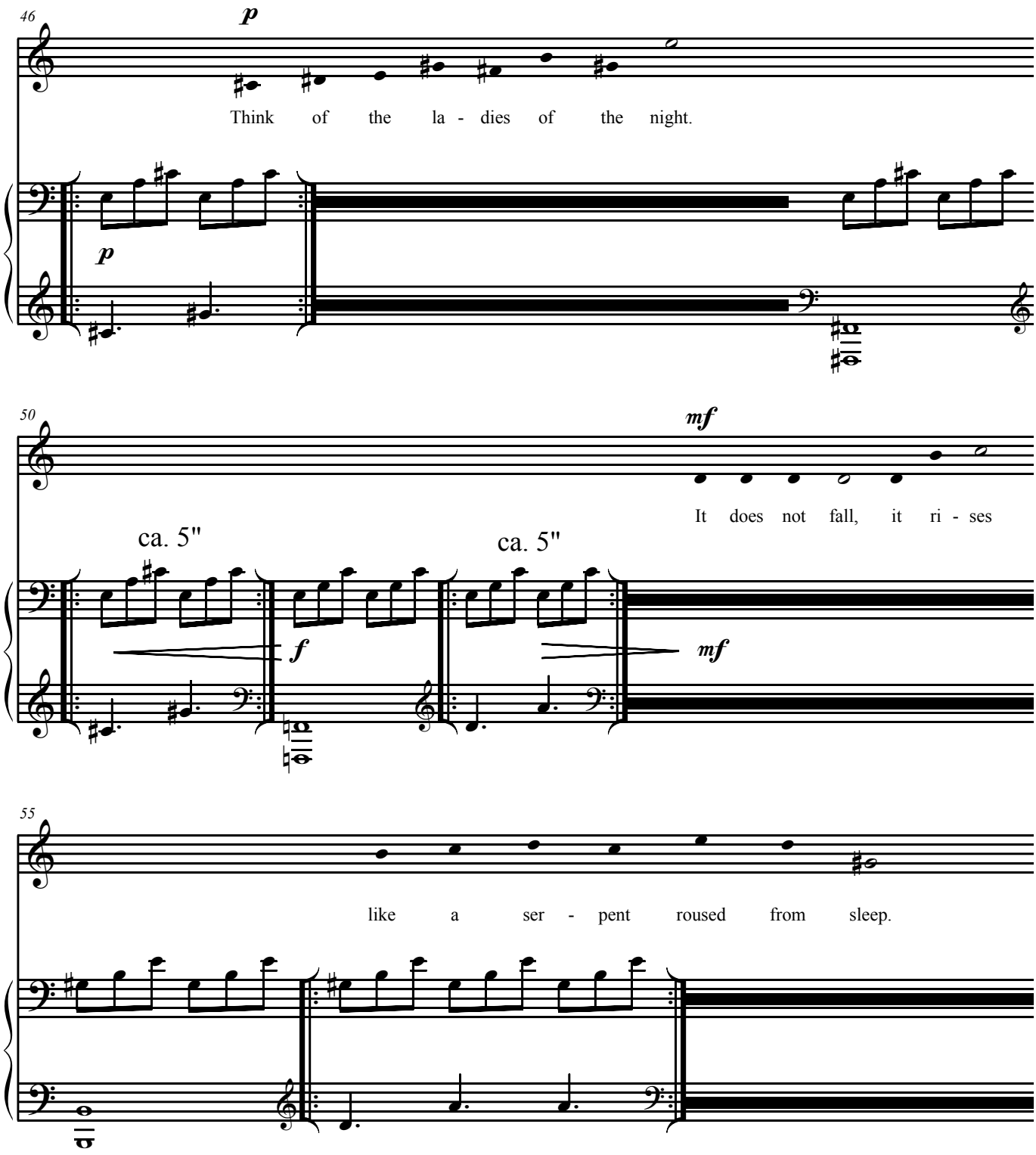
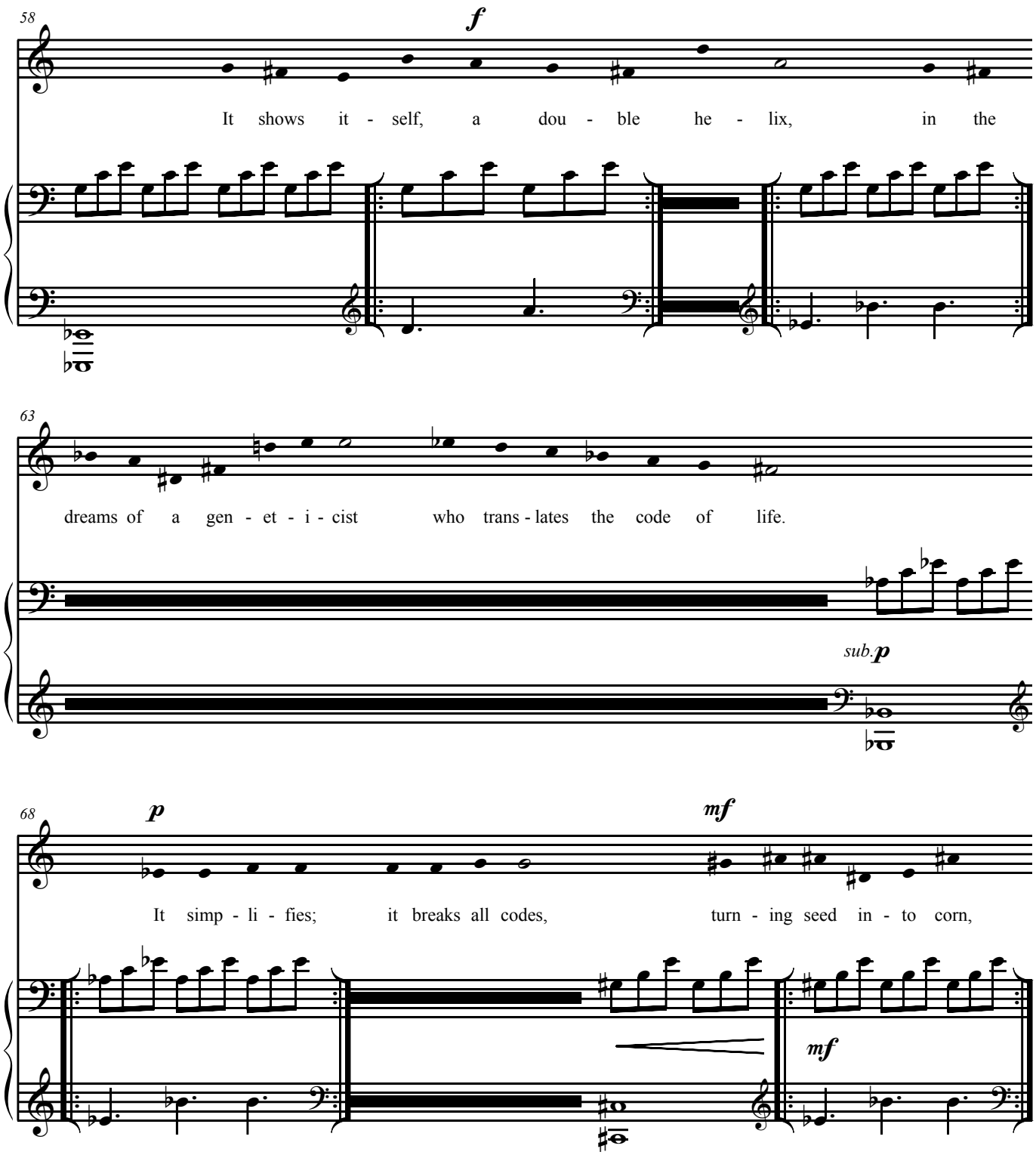
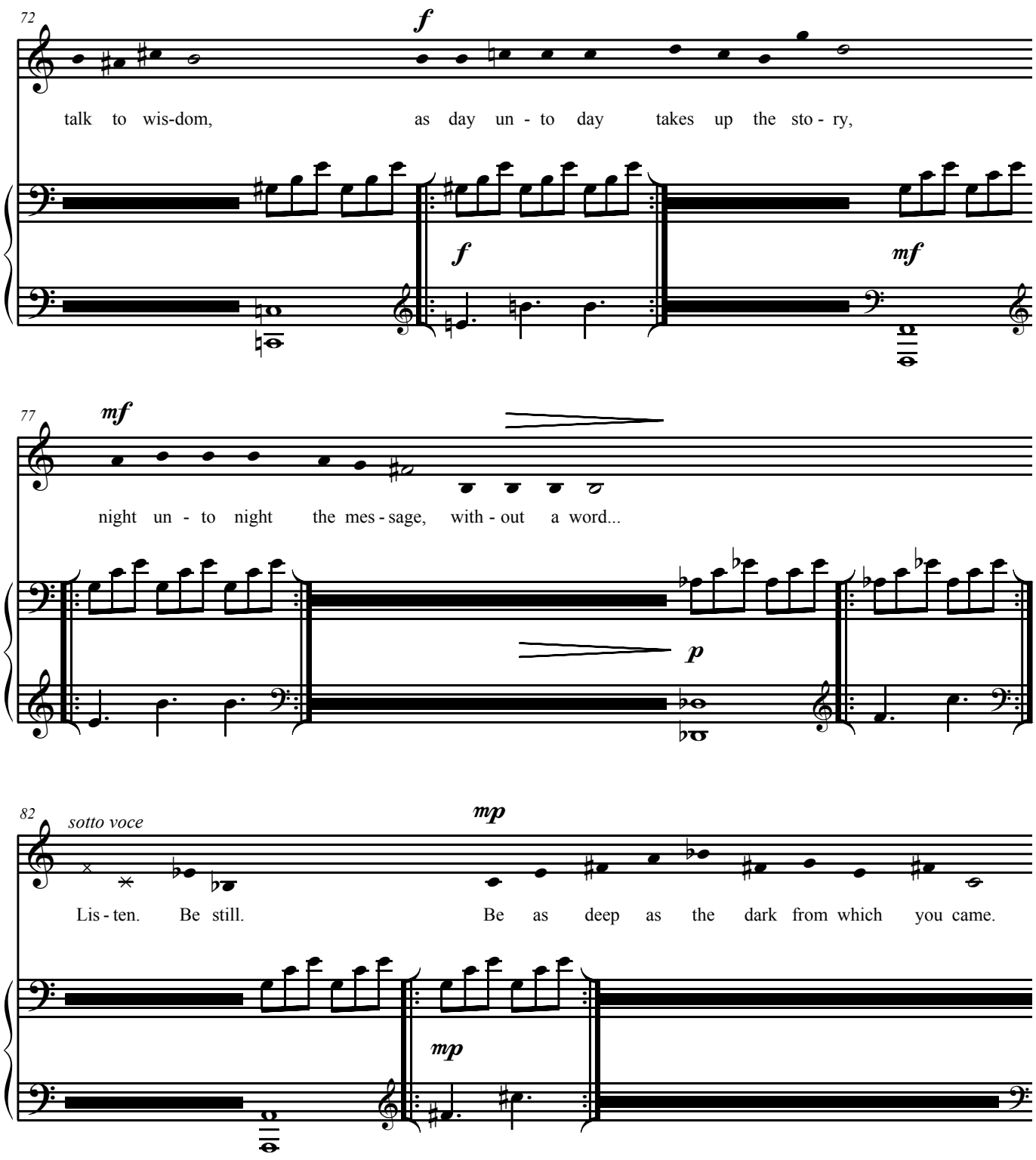
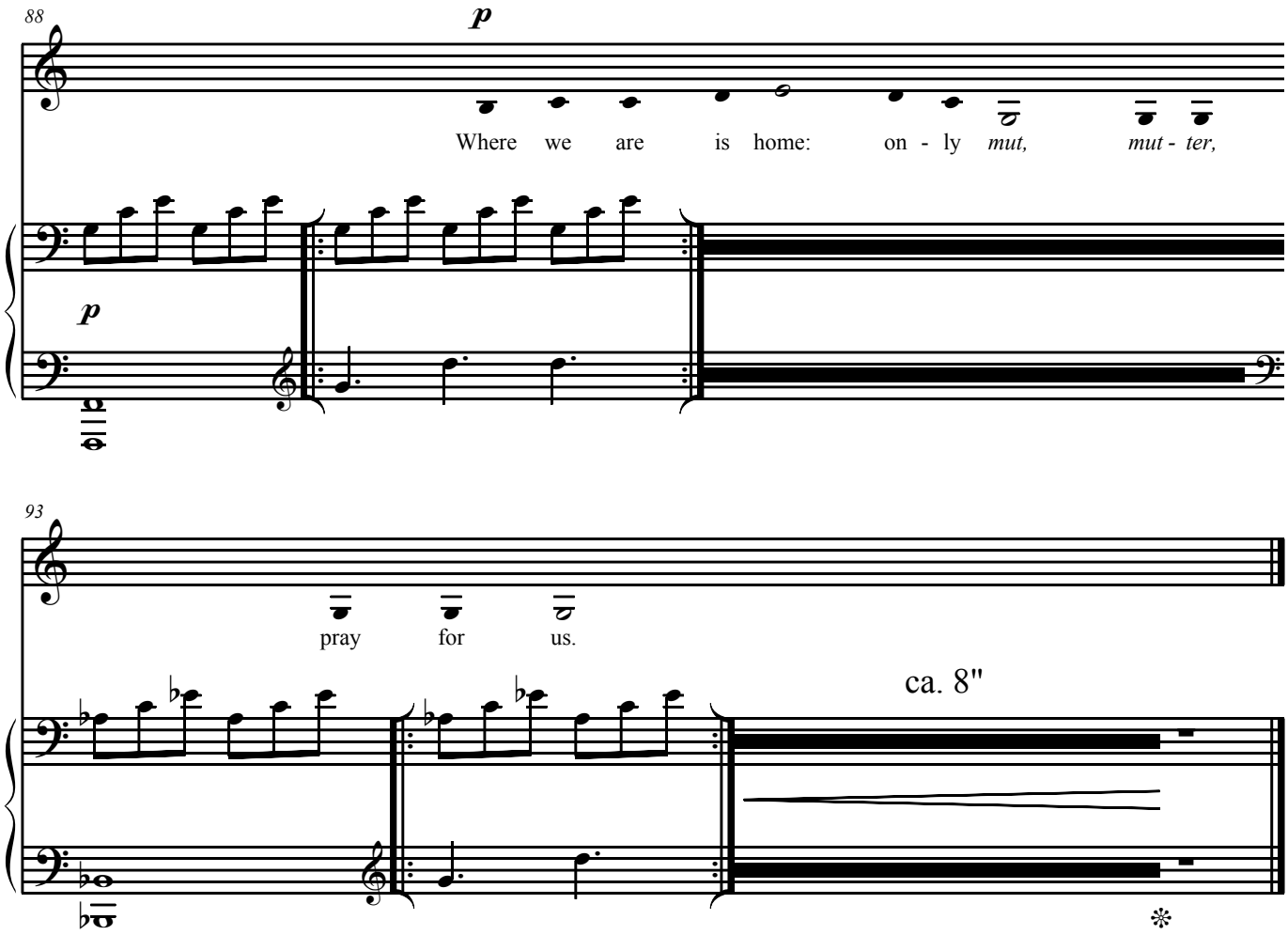

19
p
calm as the sea - rhy - thm in our veins, an - cient and sim -
24
mp
ple as salt. Think of the eye form - ing in the womb;
mp
29
mf
f
the egg, the fish, the swim - mer.
mf
f


33
p
mp
Think of fe - male mat - ter that phil - o - so - phers dis - dain,
mp
37
mf
and johns in cheap ho - tel rooms fill with mon -
mf
41
mp
ey, or them-selves, and fail and fail a - gain to re - turn to.
mp
Fl.


46
p
Think of the la - dies of the night.
p
50
mf
It does not fall, it ri - ses
ca. 5"
ca. 5"
f
mf
55
like a ser - pent roused from sleep.


58
f
It shows it - self, a dou - ble he - lix, in the
63
dreams of a gen - et - i - cist who trans - lates the code of life.
sub.p
68
p
mf
It simp - li - fies; it breaks all codes, turn - ing seed in - to corn,
mf


72
f
talk to wis-dom, as day un - to day takes up the sto - ry,
f
mf
77
mf
night un - to night the mes - sage, with - out a word...
p
82
sotto voce
mp
Lis - ten. Be still. Be as deep as the dark from which you came.
mp


88
p
Where we are is home: on - ly mut, mut - ter,
p
93
pray for us.
ca. 8"