# A SEED MARKS TIME

for SSAA Chorus,
String Quartet & Piano

CHORUS & PIANO
REDUCTION

daletrumbore
composer

TIME

I wonder how a seed marks time,
tucked into the silent earth.
Does it scratch a tally
on the inside of its husk,
numbering the days until spring,
or does everything fade
into a passing blur without
the dance of bees and the
steady tick of sun across the sky?
And what about the dormant summer grass,
lying golden under the sun?
Is it passive through the drought,
or are unseen roots searching thirstily
for remembered moisture?
I know how the sunflower
turns its bright head,
oriented through the hours.
But what of the birds
who are waiting for its seeds
to ripen, or for whatever it is
that sets them on their migratory way?
Do they have some internal calendar
with days marked in red, or do they move
through a blur of time,
forgetting appointments, neglecting obligations,
or so lost in the work of the day
that dusk goes unnoticed,
and it is suddenly dark?
Are they lost, or are they
simply listening to the earth
as it chants, low and slow:
*Now this. Now this. Now this.*

Lynn Ungar

from *These Days: Poetry of the Pandemic Age.*
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PROGRAM NOTE

Lynn Ungar's text for *A Seed Marks Time* initially appears to be about nature, contemplating how seeds mark time underground. Near the end of this poem, though, we see ourselves reflected in it. After all, it's not the birds who "move through a blur of time, / forgetting appointments, neglecting obligations" and getting so lost in their work that they forget to look up  it's us. These last few lines remind us to reconsider how we mark time: Are we simply counting minutes until it's time for the next task on our to-do list, or are we consciously noticing the beauty around us? The final line leaves us with a sung meditation that turns into a whisper: "Now this. Now this. Now this."

*A Seed Marks Time* is dedicated to Eric Nelson on the occasion of his 25th Anniversary with Atlanta Master Chorale, with gratitude for his contributions to the choral canon and his visionary pursuit of excellence in choral music that touches spirit. This piece is commissioned and premiered by Atlanta Master Chorale (Eric Nelson, Artistic Director) and guest conducted by Jonathan Easter.

PERFORMANCE NOTES

Choir:

> Notes in parentheses may be omitted (mouthed, but not sung) if out of range.
> Slide through the entire marked duration of a glissando.

Strings:

> When a glissando is marked between two notes, bow them separately unless otherwise indicated.
> Slide through the entire marked duration of a glissando.

Piano:

> Boxes indicate a brief gesture that should be repeated for as long as is indicated by the following arrow. Notes within a box should be played in any order, rippling, ebbing and flowing in tempo like wind chimes.

Duration: ca. 11 minutes
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# A Seed Marks Time

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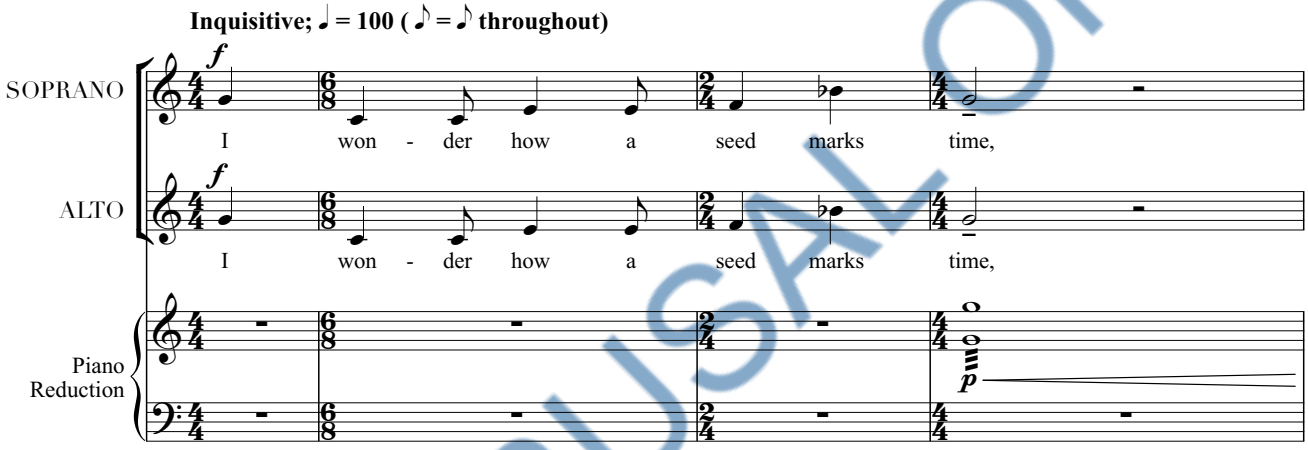
Text by Lynn Ungar

Music by Dale Trumbore

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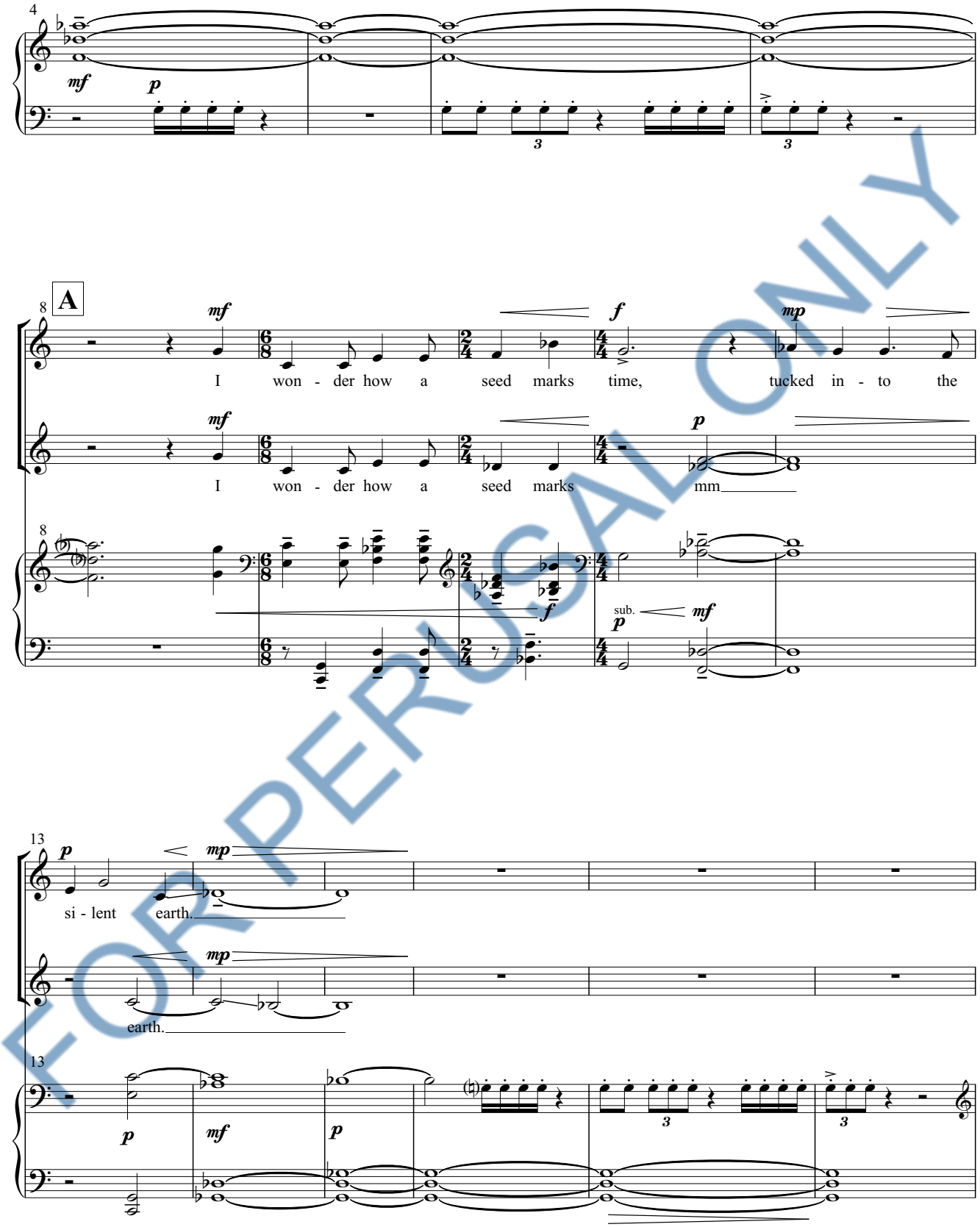


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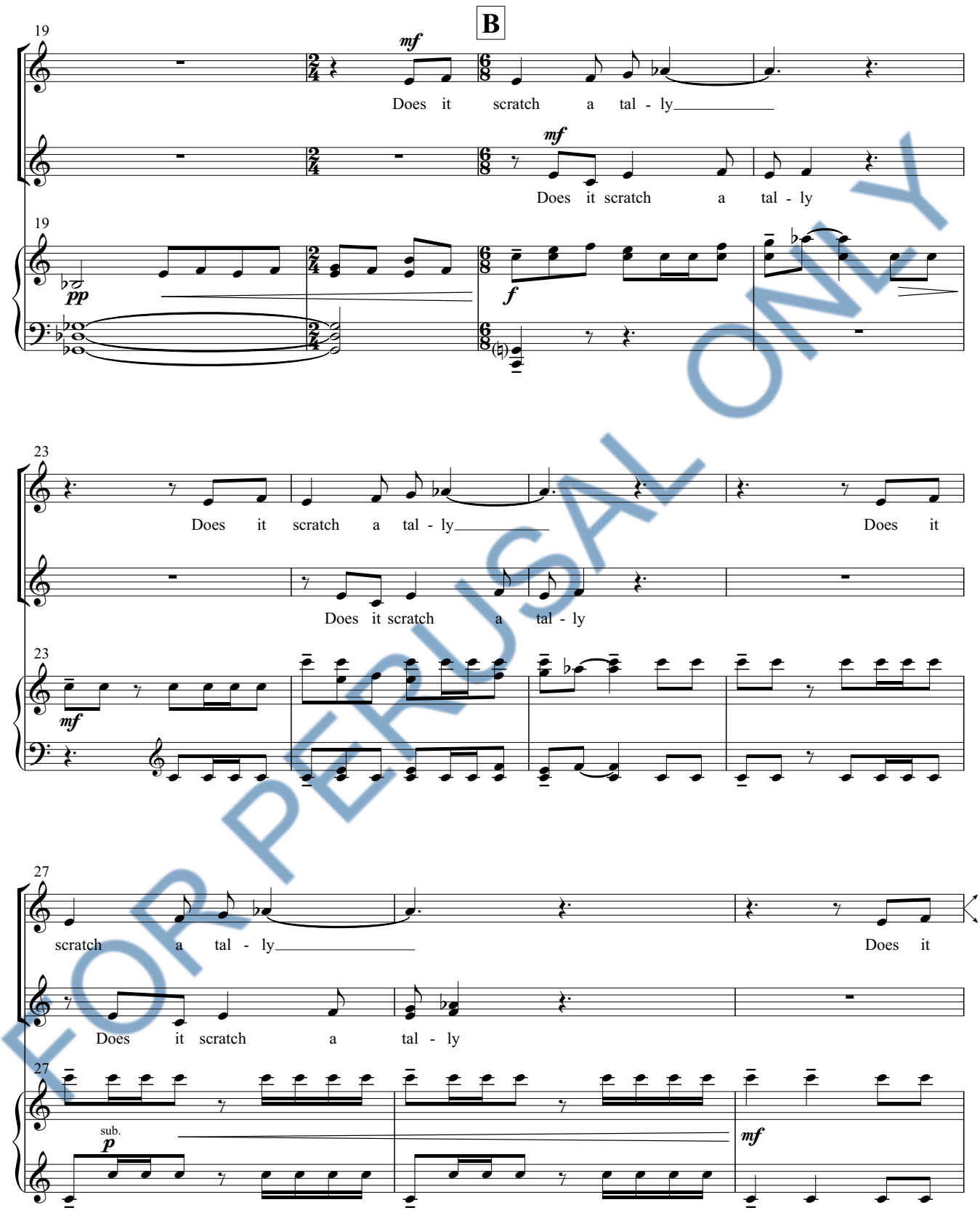


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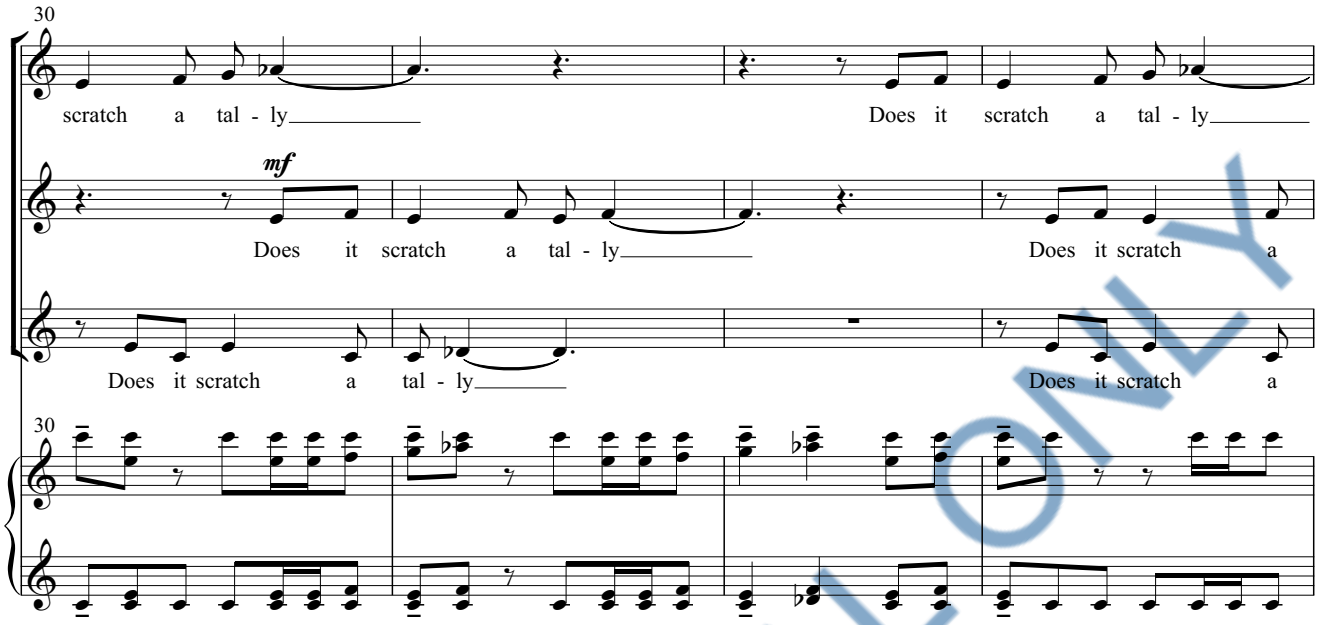


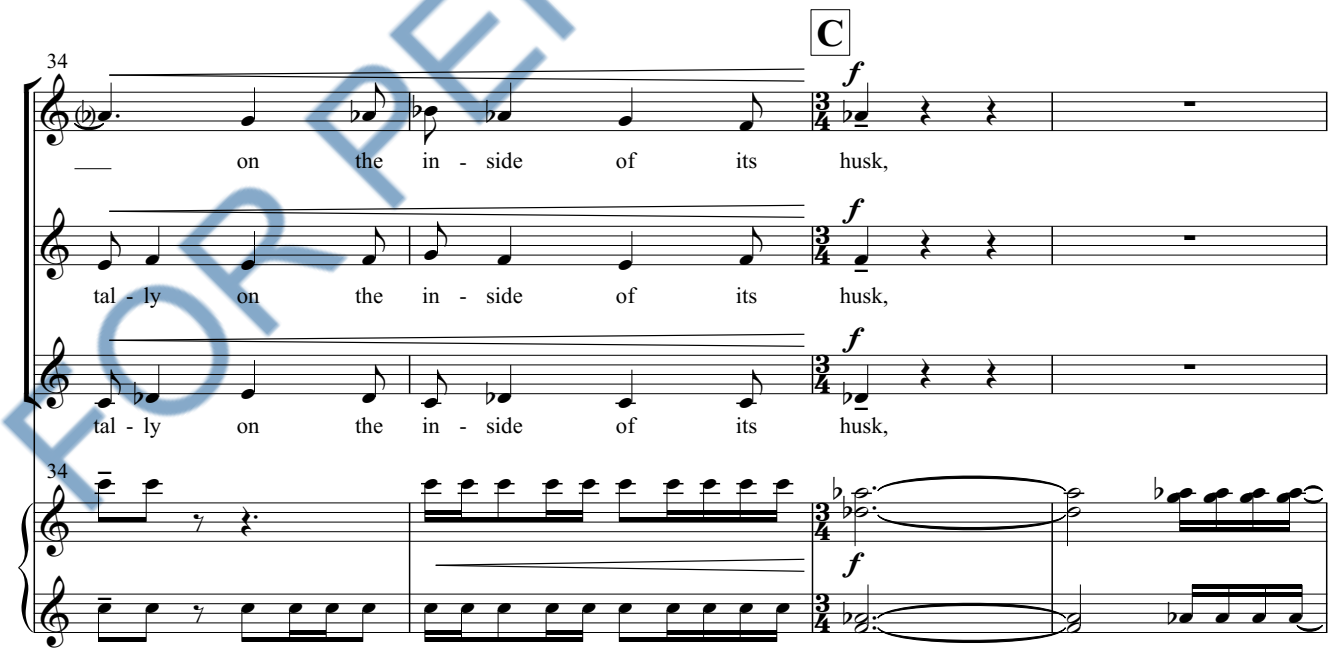


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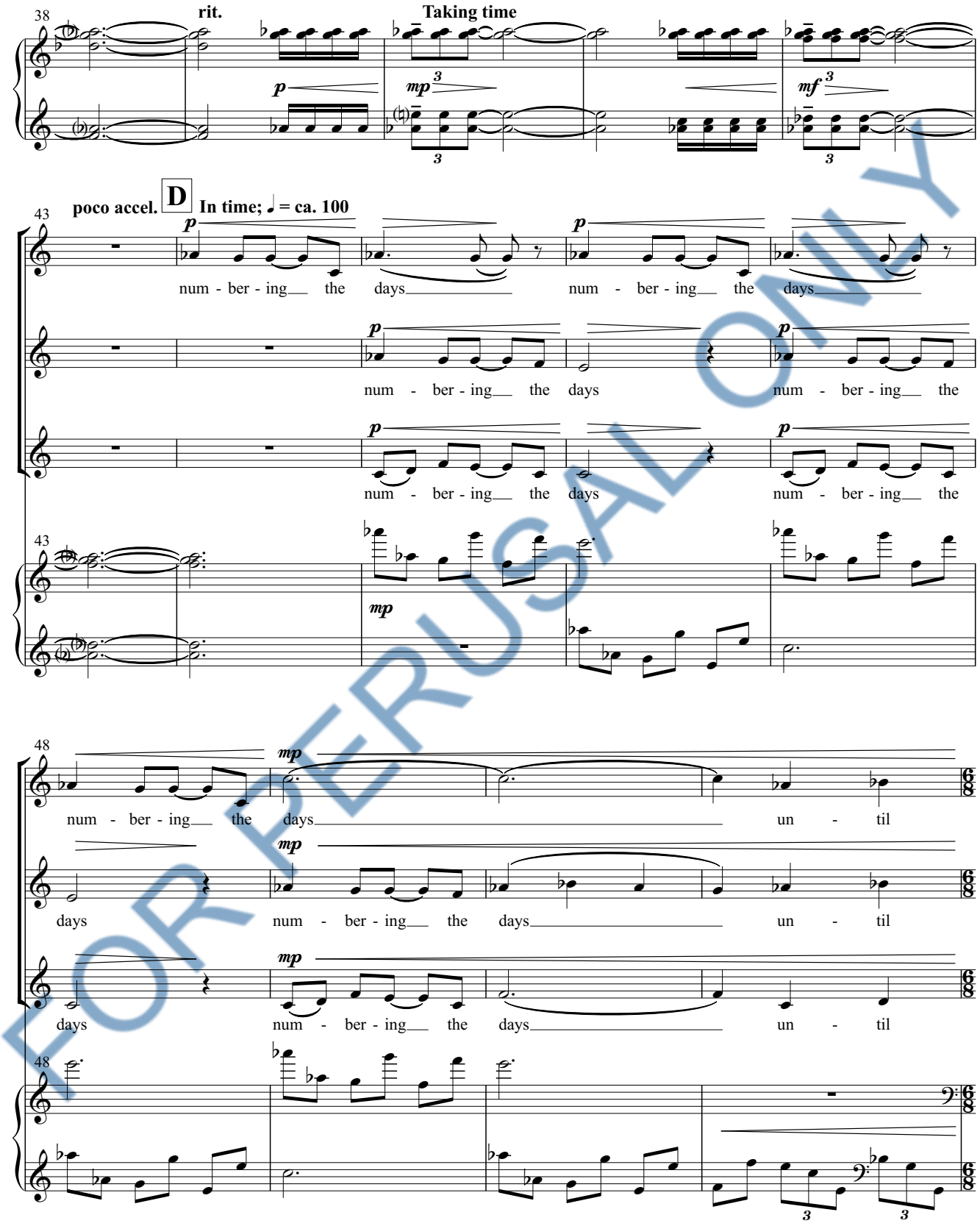


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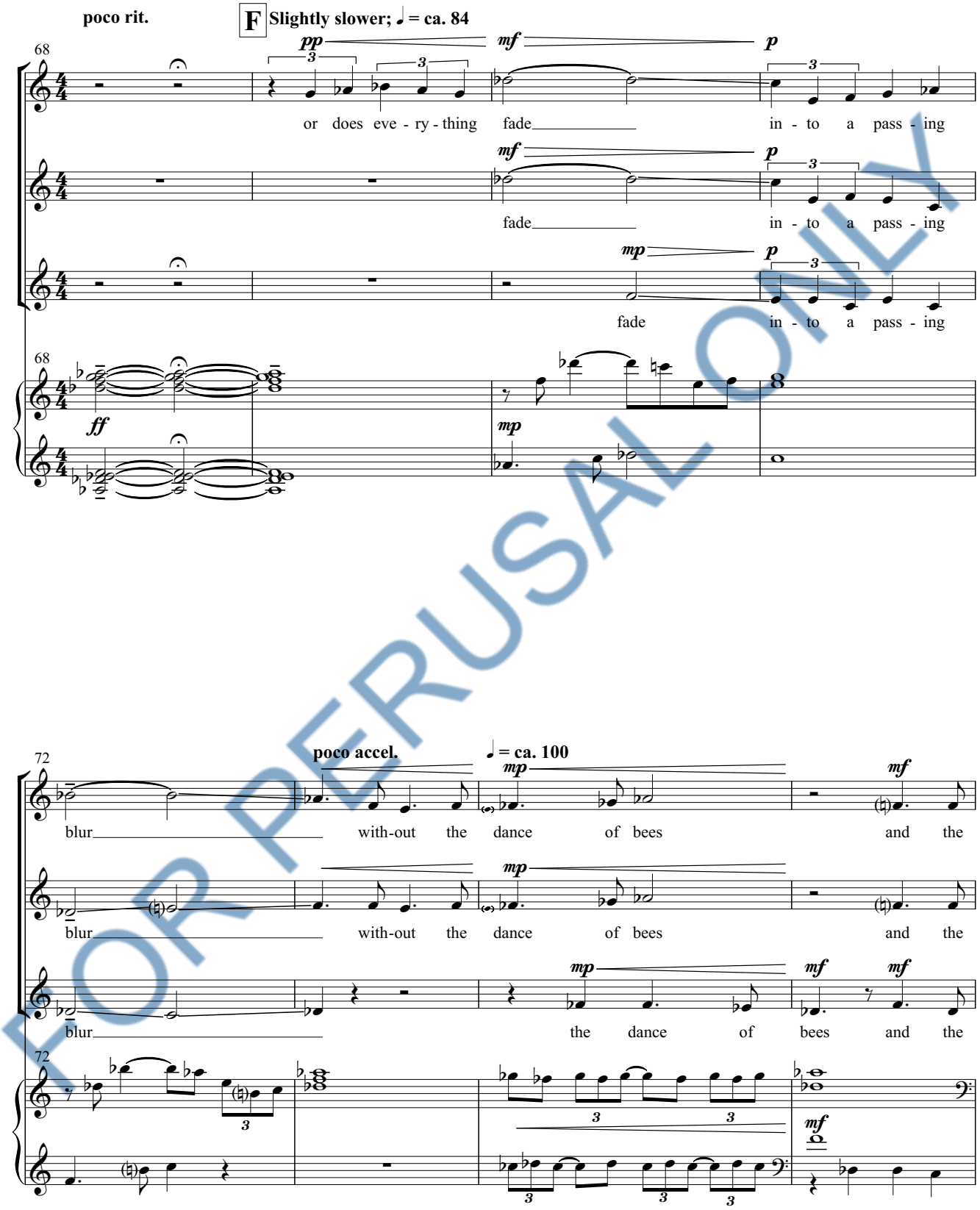


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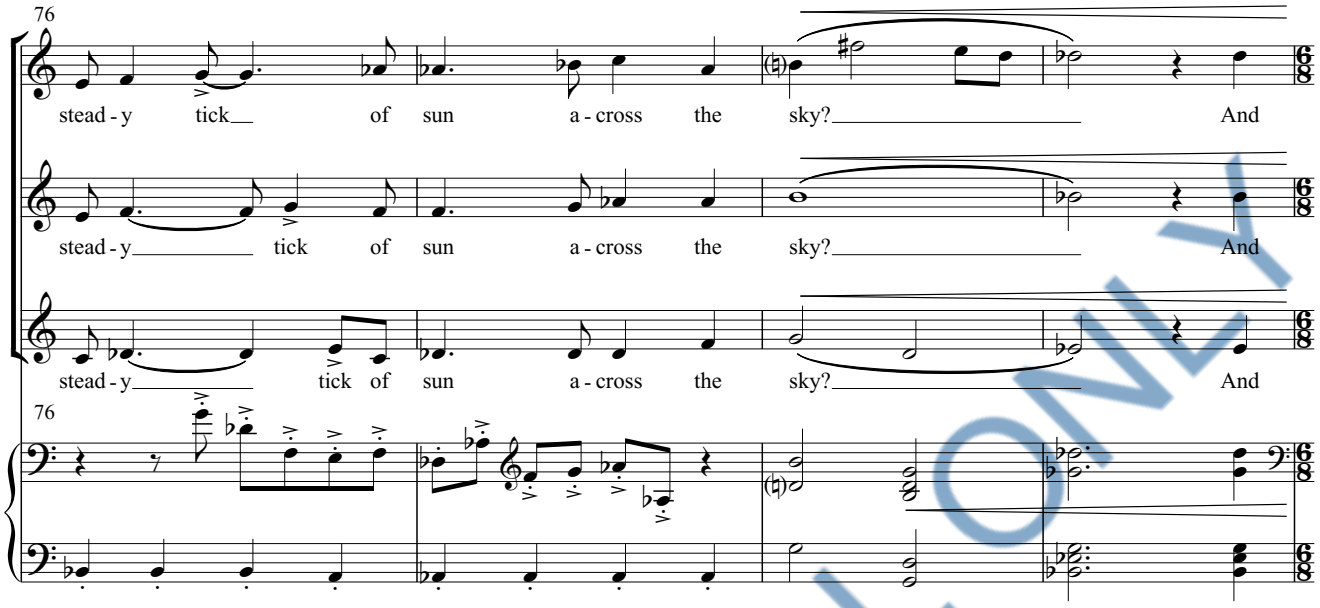


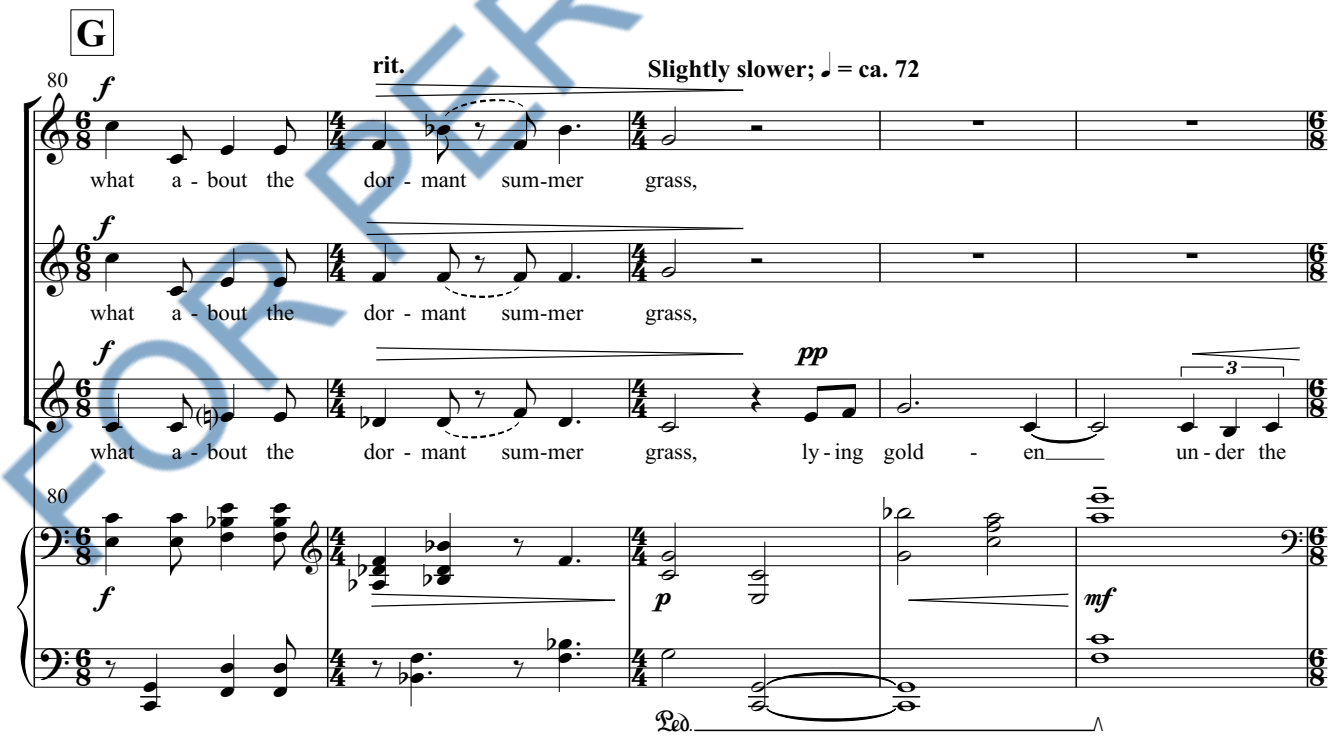


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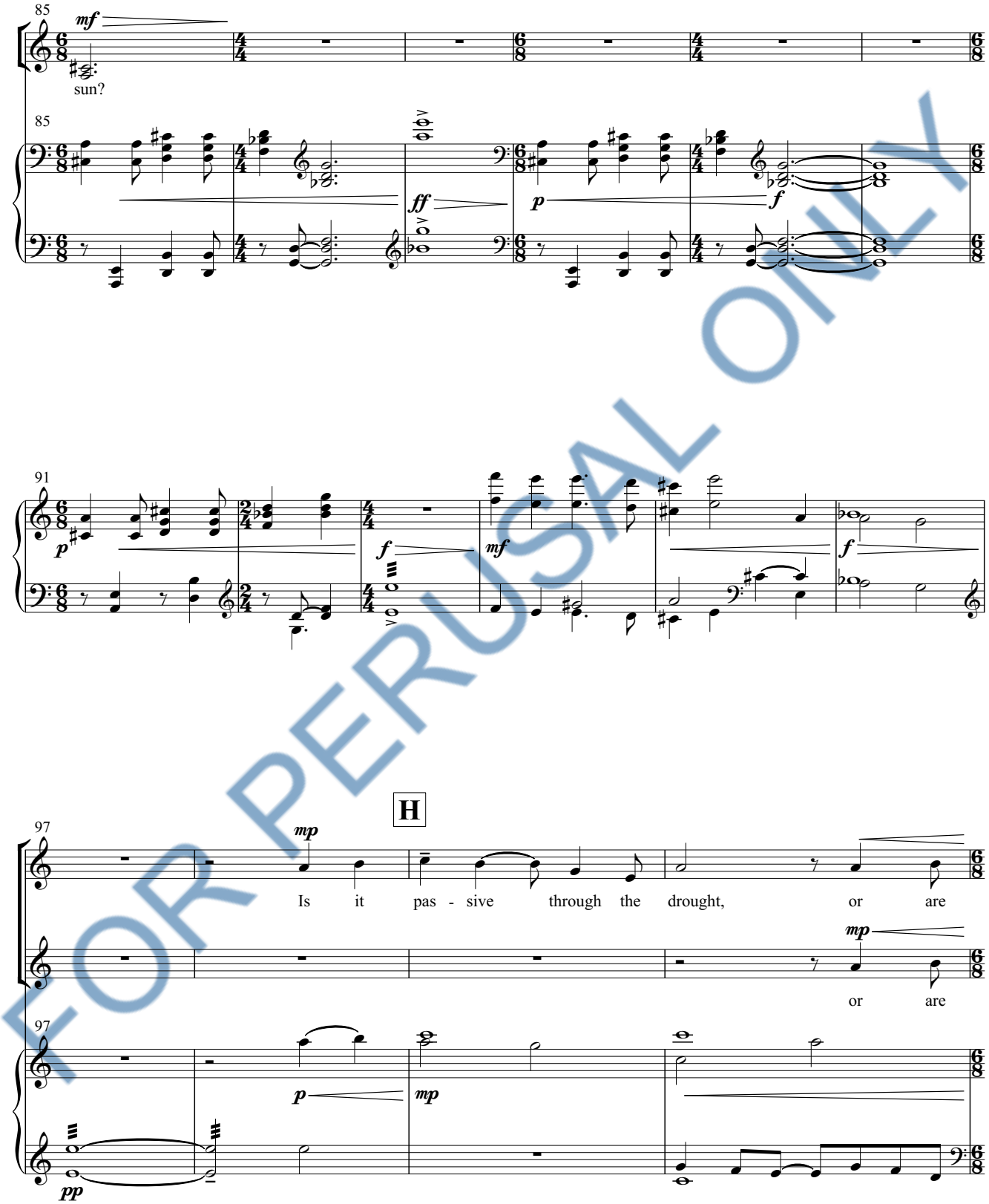


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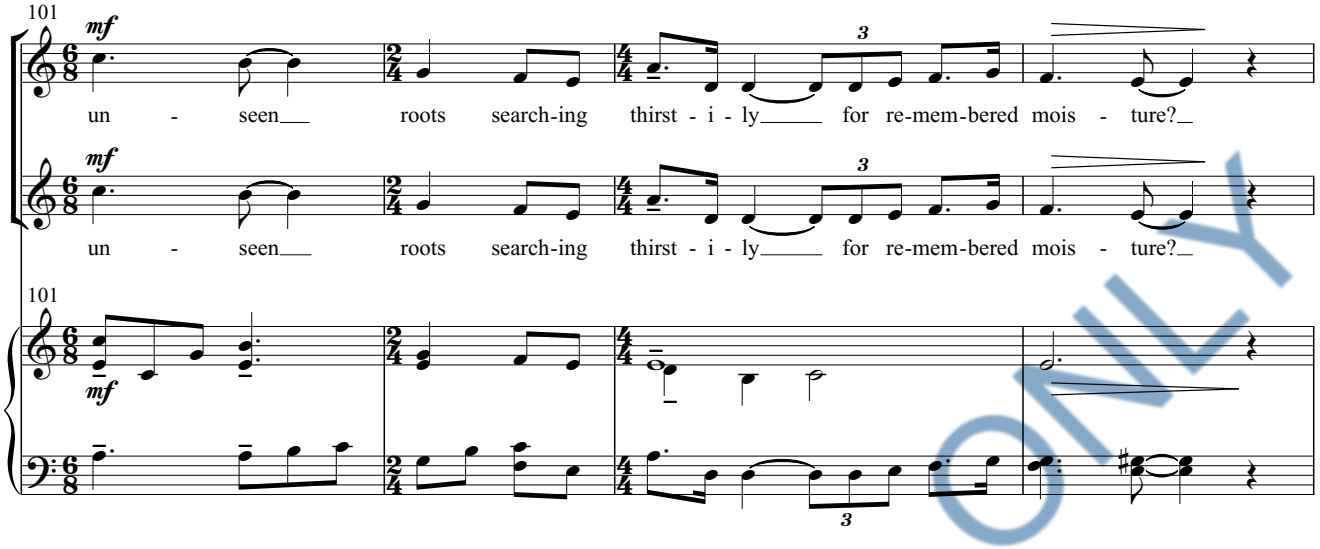


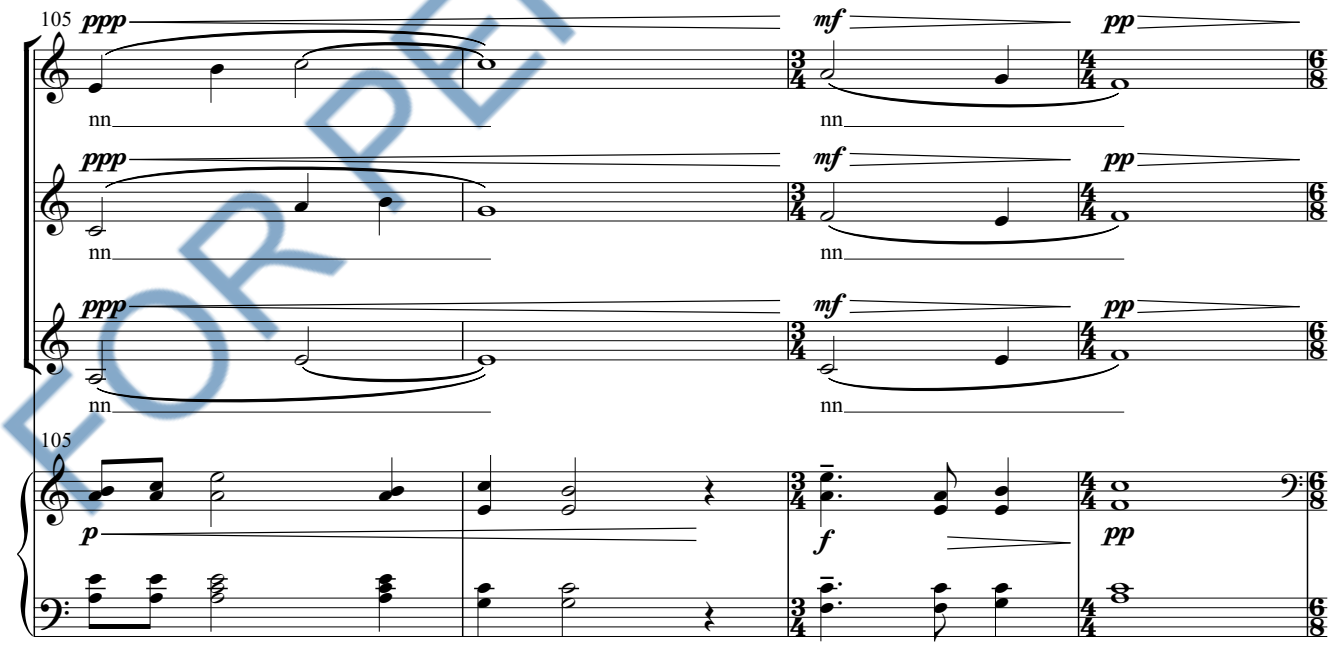


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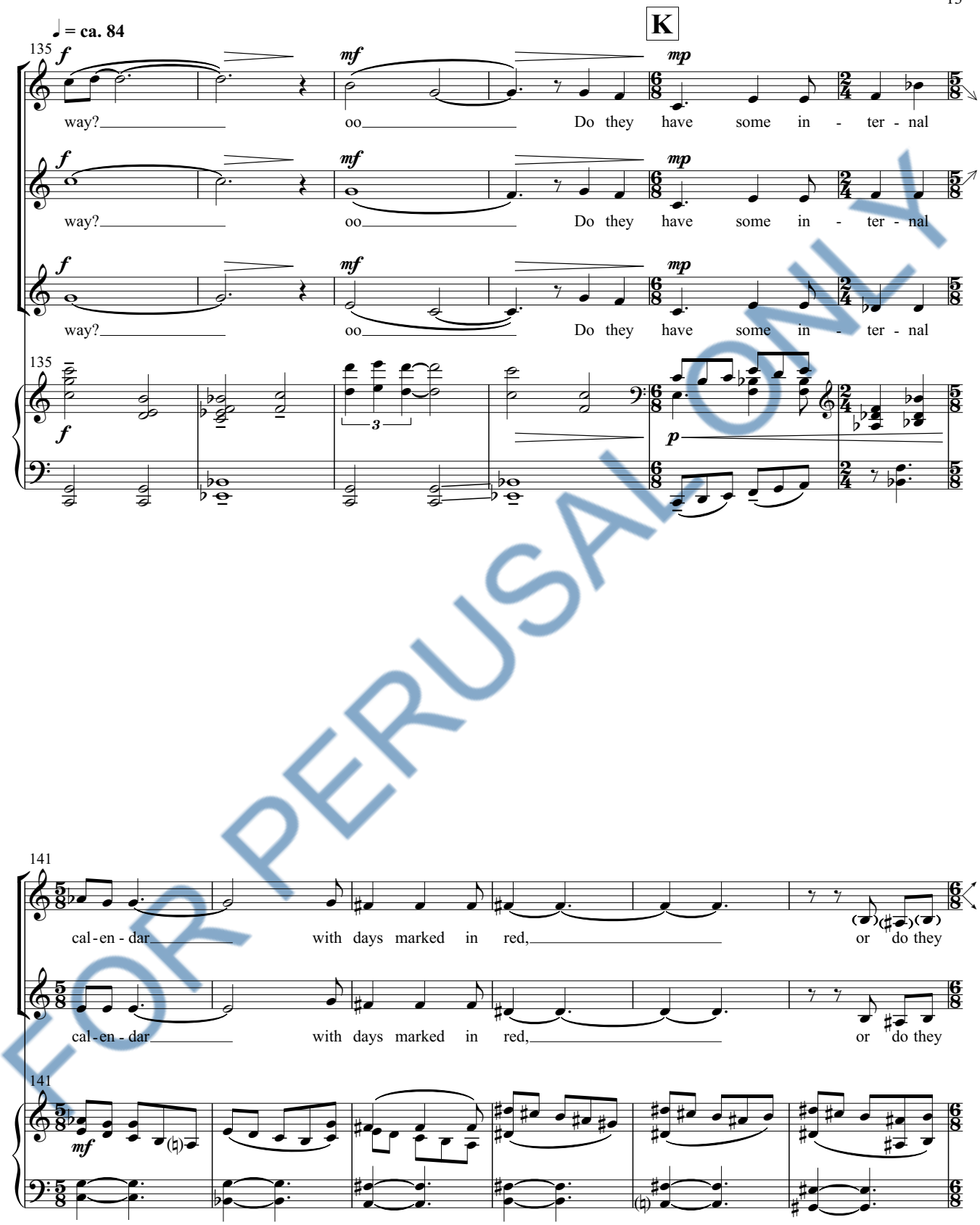


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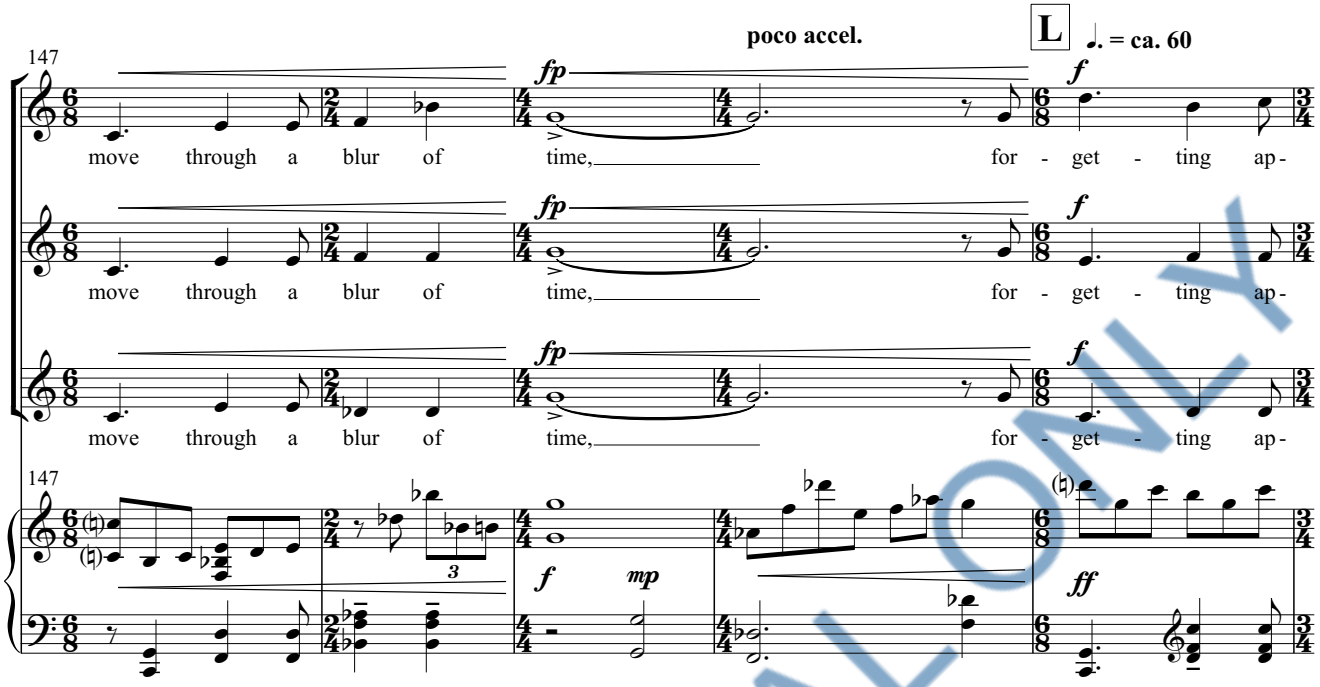


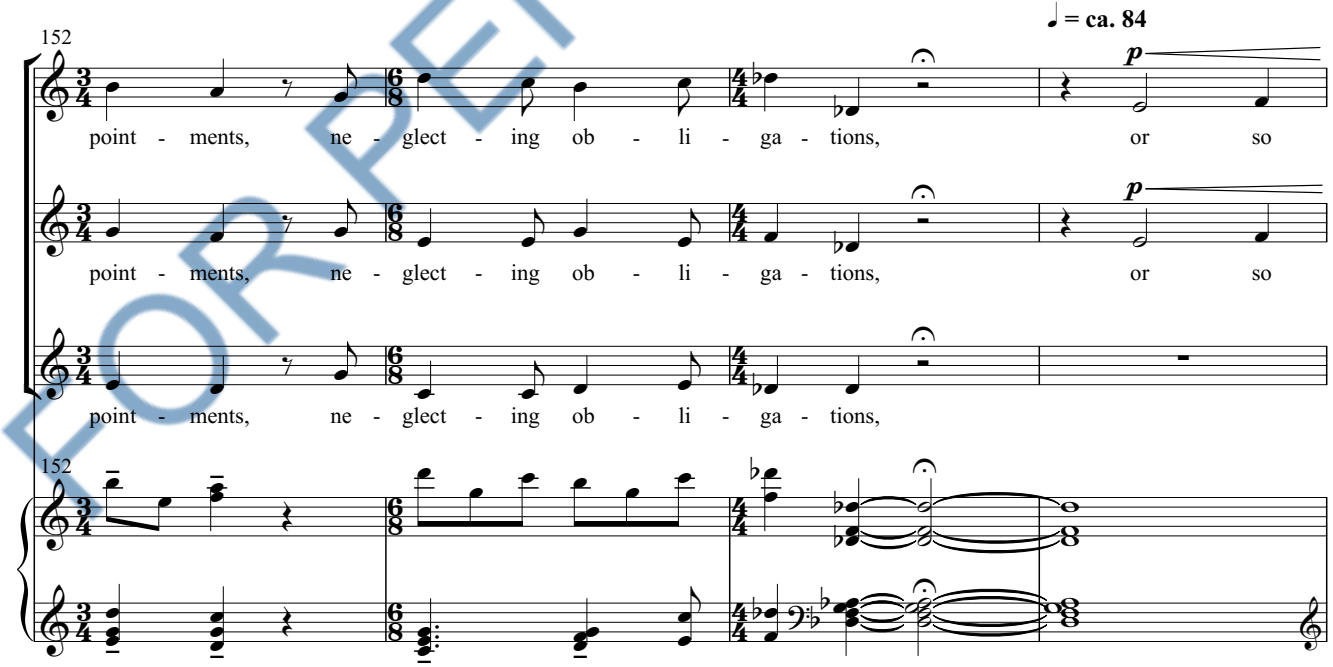


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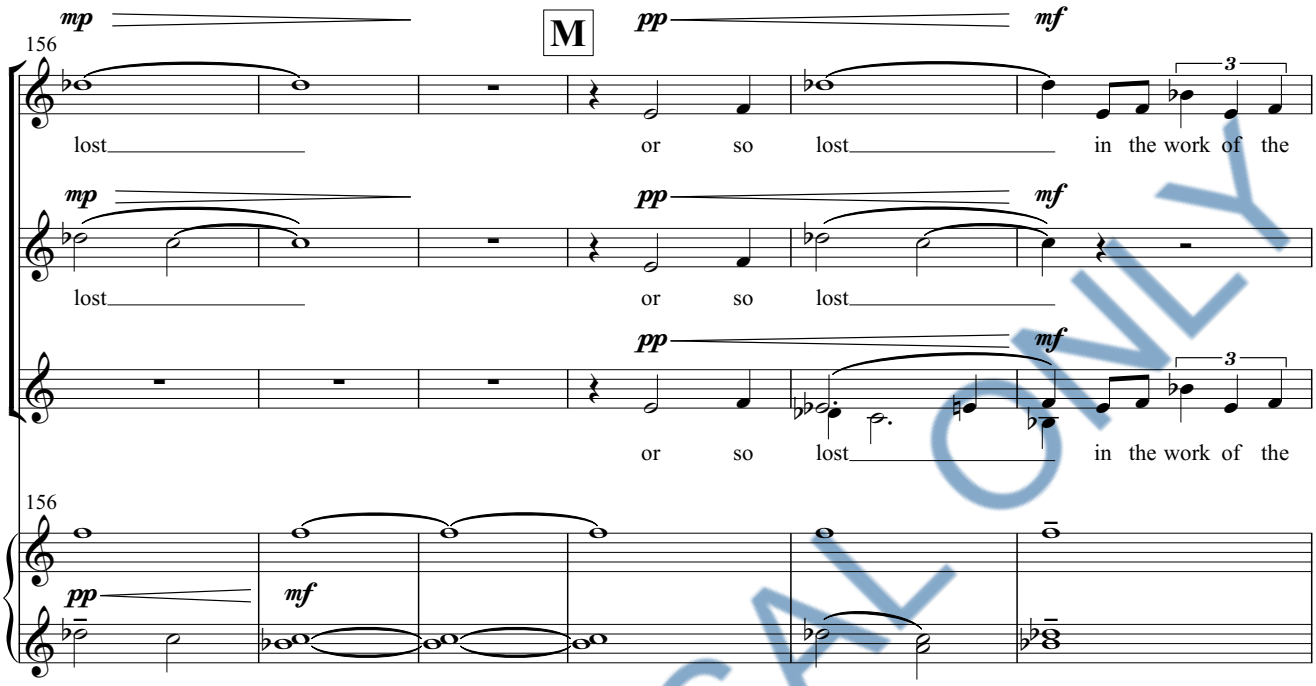

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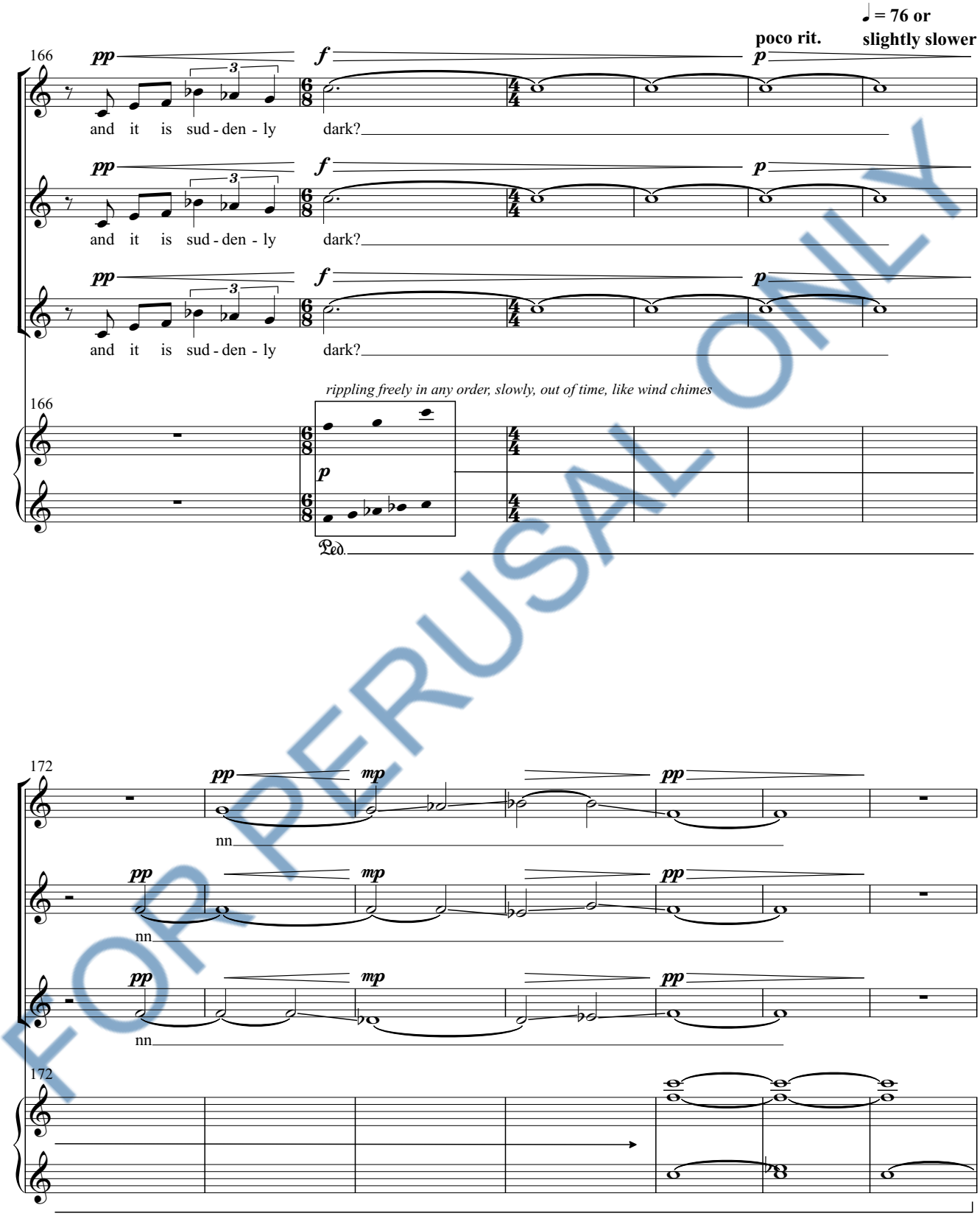


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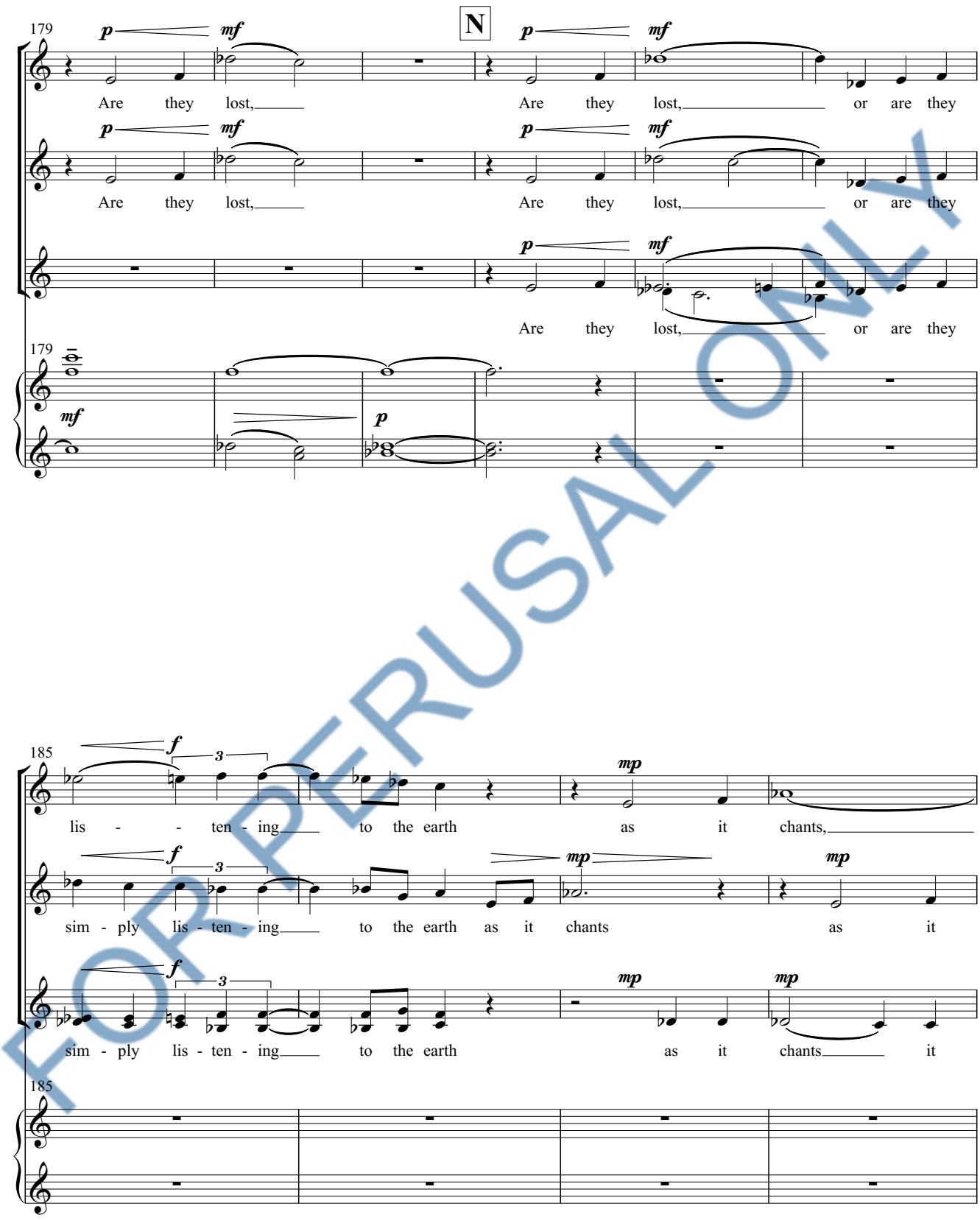


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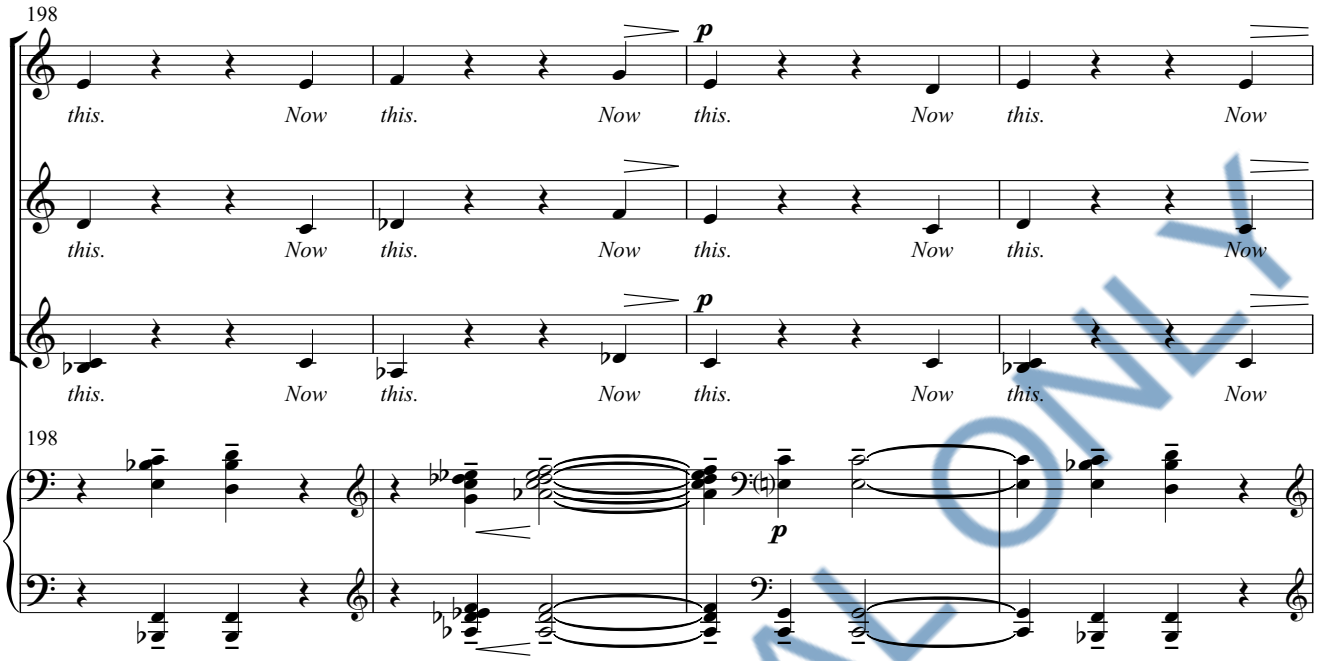


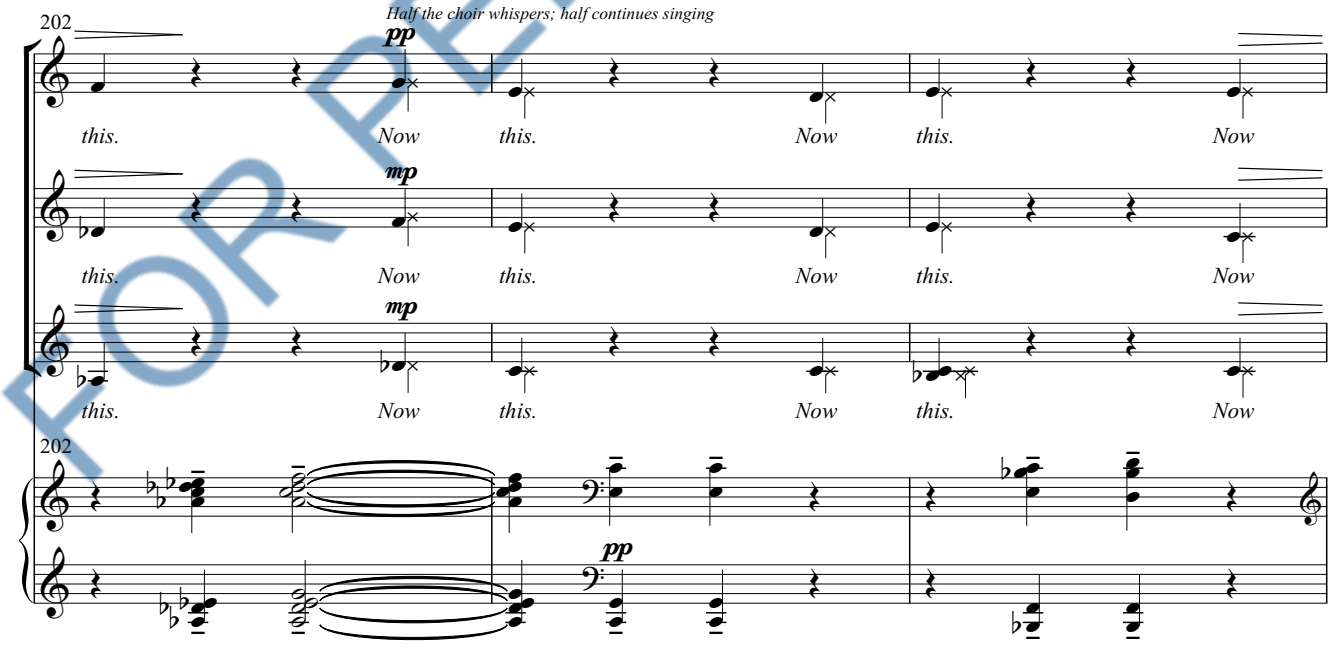


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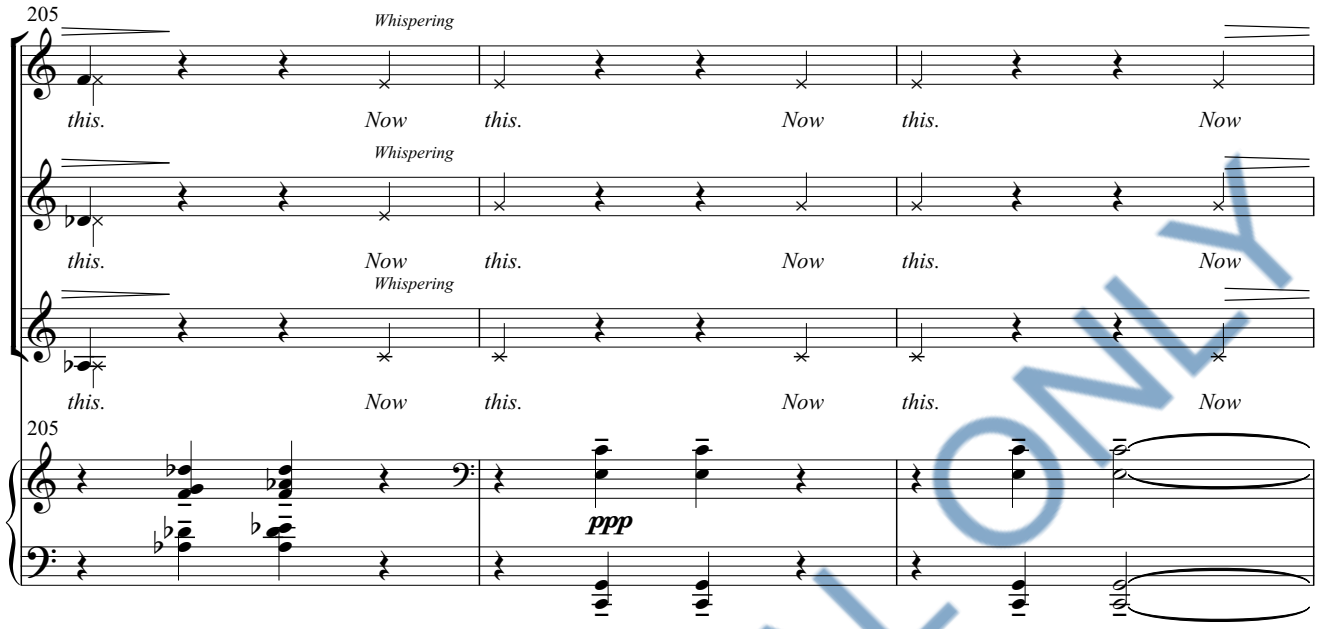


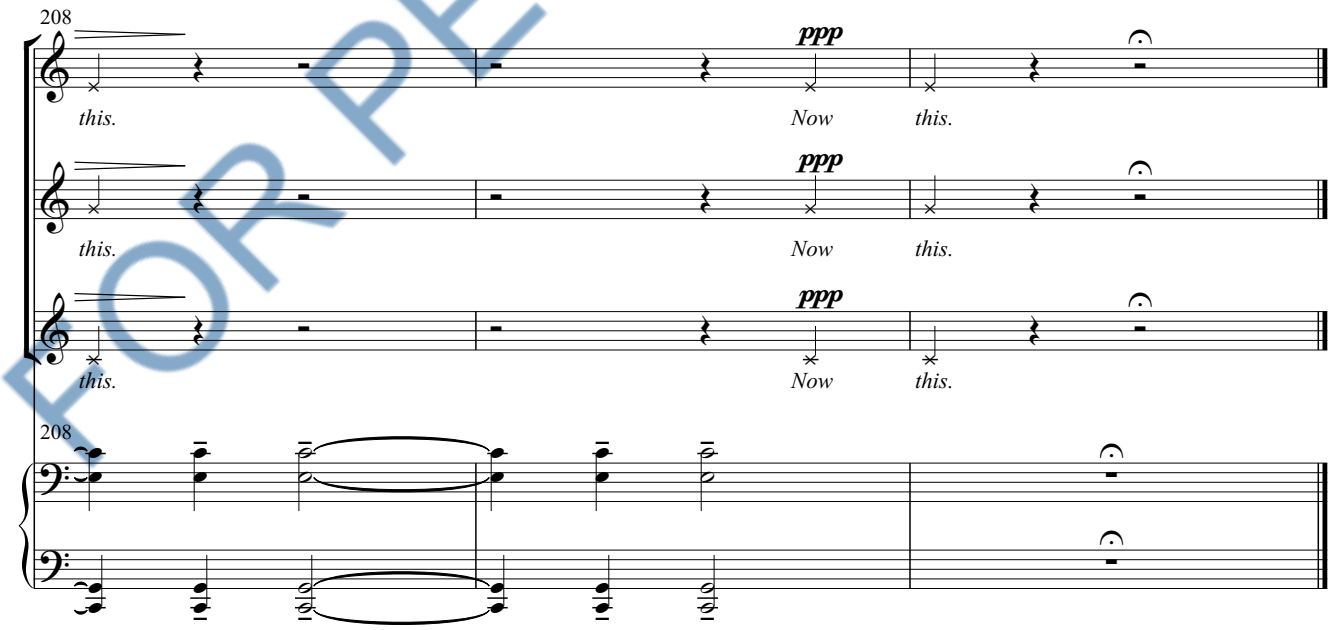


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