Three Travelling Songs

For voice and instrumental trio

Words by Simon Armitage

Music arranged and composed by Nigel Morgan

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About the music

Simon Armitage describes his *Travelling Songs* as 'a kind of busker's handbook, the kind of work that might win a poet a decent meal when singing for his supper'. My setting of three of his 'songs' aims to provide music for busking . . . in the restaurant of Yorkshire Sculpture Park's Visitors' Centre with the idea that the performers might, at the very least, earn themselves a cup of tea and a bun.

The music was commissioned by Yorkshire Sculpture Park for *Rhythm of the Stones* - a day of music making on June 14 2003 focused on the Barbara Hepworth Centenary Exhibition.

The *Travelling Songs* have absolutely no connection with Barbara Hepworth but were suggested as a way of bringing a little light interval music to locations around the Sculpture Park between the more serious parts of the music programme.

All three tunes for the songs are mercilessly borrowed . . . but then Mr Armitage has borrowed them too.

The 'buskers' for the first performance were all members of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales:

Philippa Reeves - soprano
Eva Stewart - piccolo
John Cooper - alto saxophone in Eb
David Langstroth - double bass

More information about *Rhythm of the Stones* is available at http://www.nigel-morgan.co.uk.

The song settings are dedicated to my daughter Megan-Ruth - who likes to sing.

Little No Thing

We had a thing
        we called a name,

that came and went
        before its time,

whose simple pulse
        they couldn't find,

who had no mind
        to think ahead,

whose heart they said
        was left for dead,

whose will to live
        was weeks behind,

who thoughtlessly
        had gone and died.

Now we have no thing
        in our life.

The National Trust Range of Paints Colour Card

String and Pigeon and Sugar-Bag Light,
Lichen and Powder Blue.
        I can sing a rainbow, sing a rainbow,
        sing a rainbow too.

Hay and Biscuit and Hardwick White,
Buff and Berrington Blue.
        Poverty's a shame though, is a shame though,
        is a shame it's true.

Drab and Olive, Dead Salmon and Bone,
Down Pipe and Ballroom Blue.
        Nobody's to blame though, is to blame though,
        is to blame but you.

Eating-Room Red and London Stone,
Fowler Pink, Cane and Hague Blue.
        I can see the grain grow, see the grain grow,
        see the grain grow through.

I took a train . . .

I took a train to Oxford, and walked in to a den
of disappointing poets, and disappointed men.
        My father was a stone, I said,
            my mother was a hen
  there's who knows what inside my head
but I write like a dream my friends, my friends,
        I write like a dream, I said.

I took a train to Cambridge, and walked into the lives
of disappointing teachers and their disappointing wives.
        My sister was a bone, I said,
            my brother was a gem,
  my best day's work was done in bed
but I write like a dream my friends, my friends,
        I write like a dream, I said.

I took a plane to Harvard, I took a plane to Yale,
and every student handed in a sorry little tale.
        My maker was a star, I said,
            my teacher was a mole,
  one of these day's I'll wake up dead
but I write like a dream my friends, my friends,
I write like a dream, I said.

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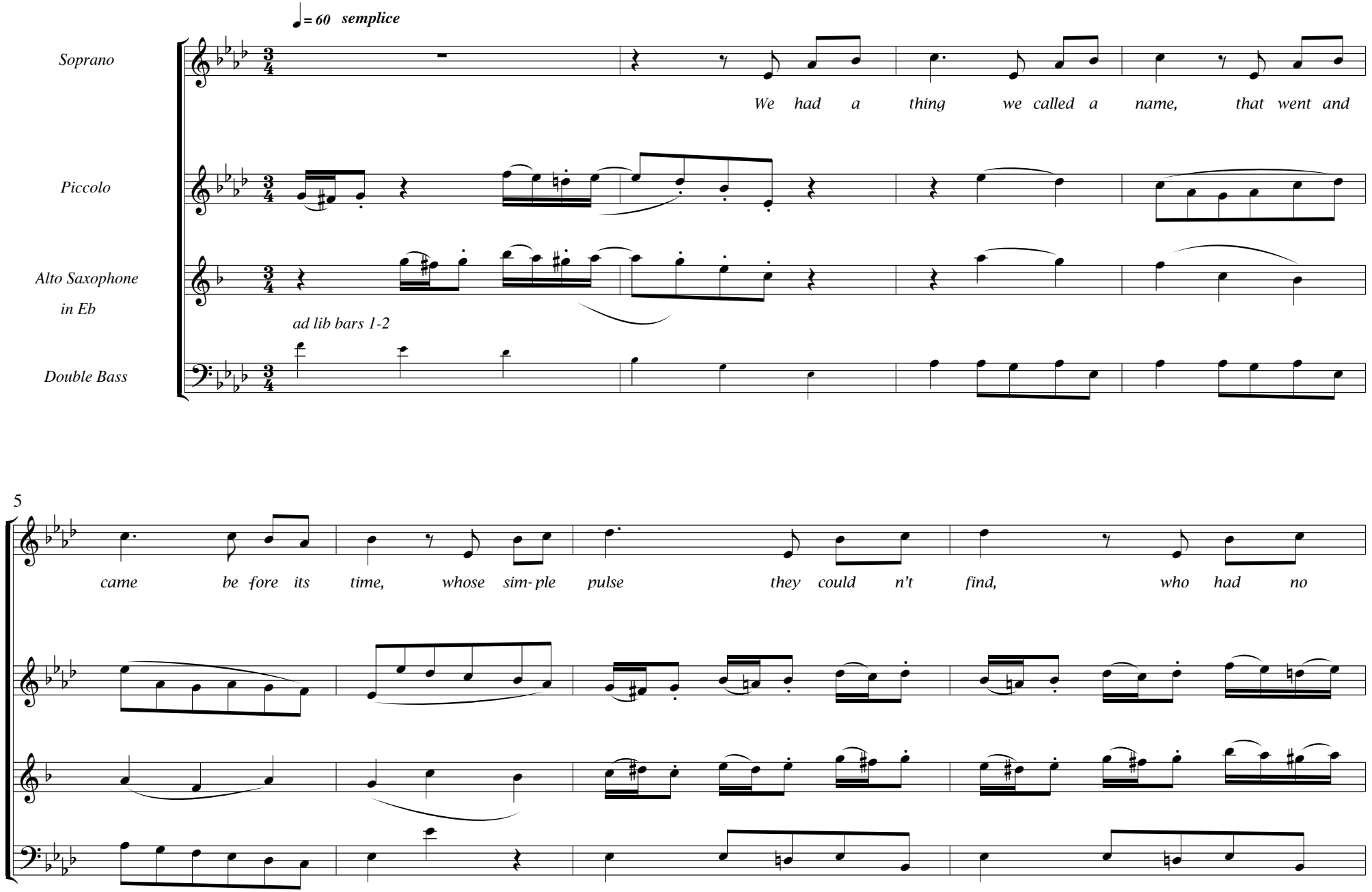
Words by Simon Armitage

Little No Thing

Music by Nigel Morgan



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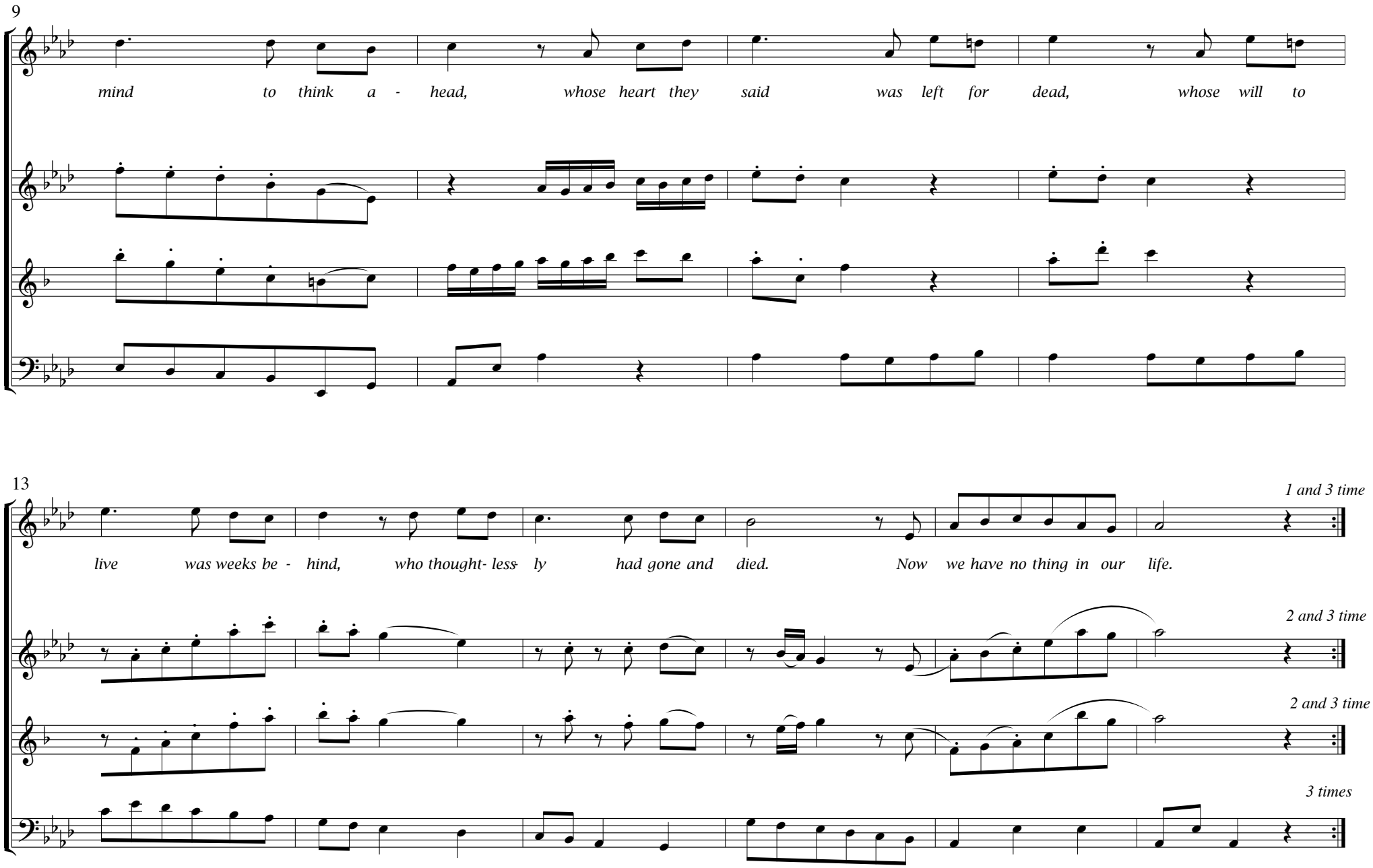
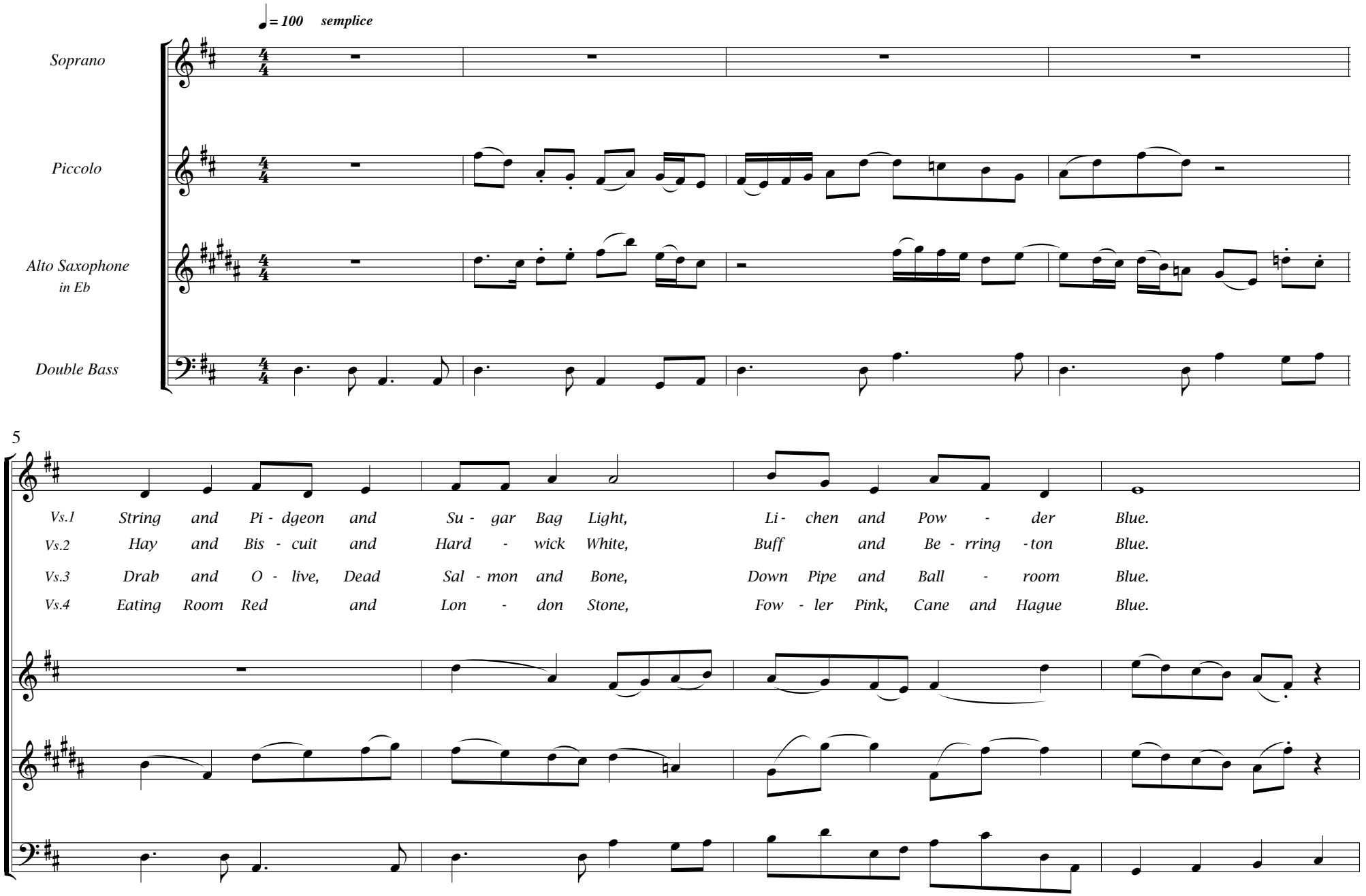

9
mind to think a - head, whose heart they said was left for dead, whose will to
13
live was weeks be - hind, who thought- less- ly had gone and died. Now we have no thing in our life.
1 and 3 time
2 and 3 time
2 and 3 time
3 times

The National Trust Range of Paints Colour Card

Words by Simon Armitage

Music by Nigel Morgan after Arthur Hamilton



9

I can sing a rain - bow, sing a rain - bow, sing a rain - bow too.
Po - ver - ty's a shame though, is a shame though, is a shame it's true.
No - bo -dy's to blame though, is to blame though, is to blame but you.
I can see the grain grow, see the grain grow, see the grain grow through.

13

Spoken - in a throughly Joyce Grenfell accent:

Vs1. You are listening to the National Trust Range of Paints Colour Card

Vs.2 Here's another chance to hear a selection from the National Trust Range of Paints Colour Card

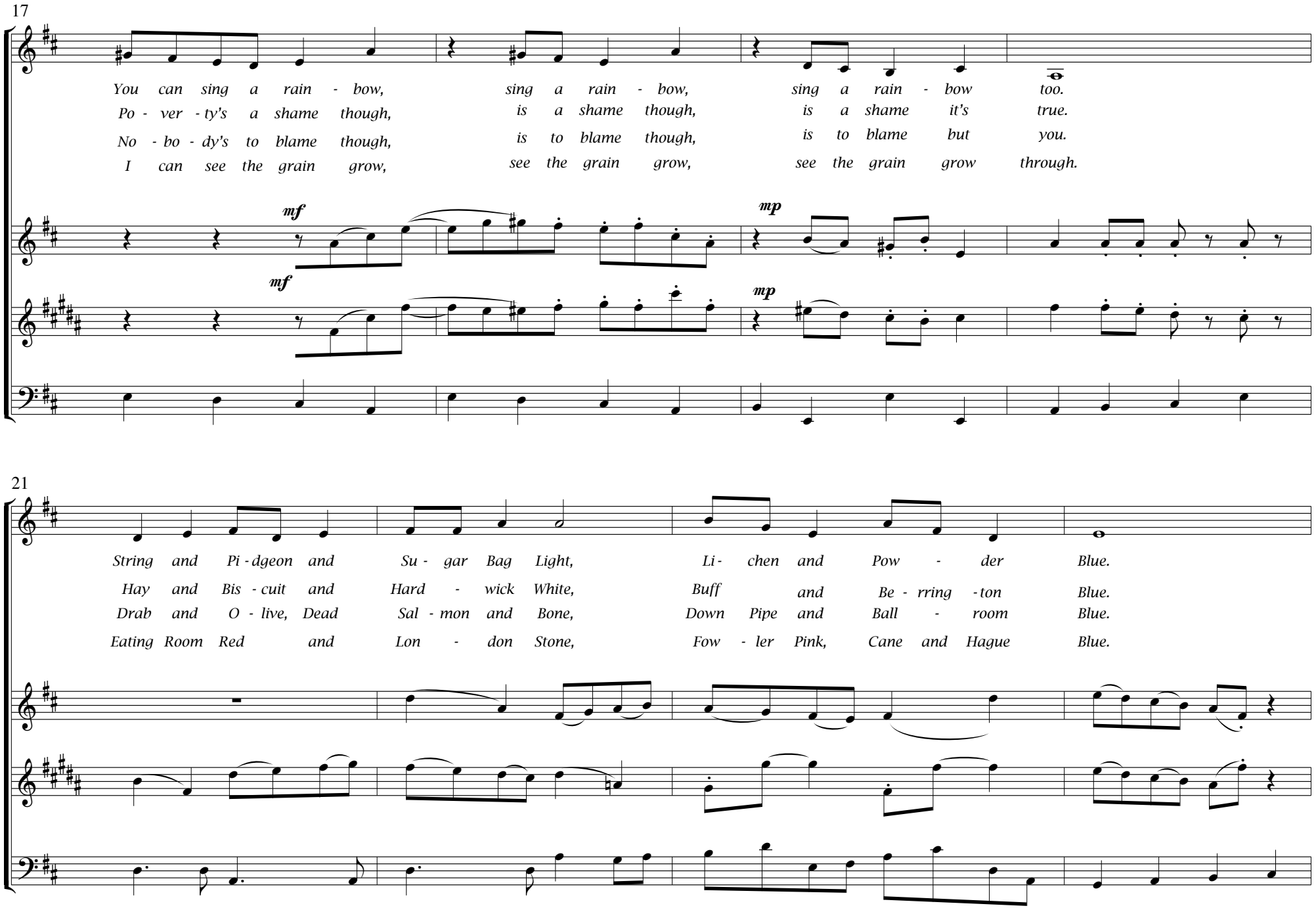
Vs.3 Unbelievable but true, a further selection from the National Trust Range of Paints Colour Card

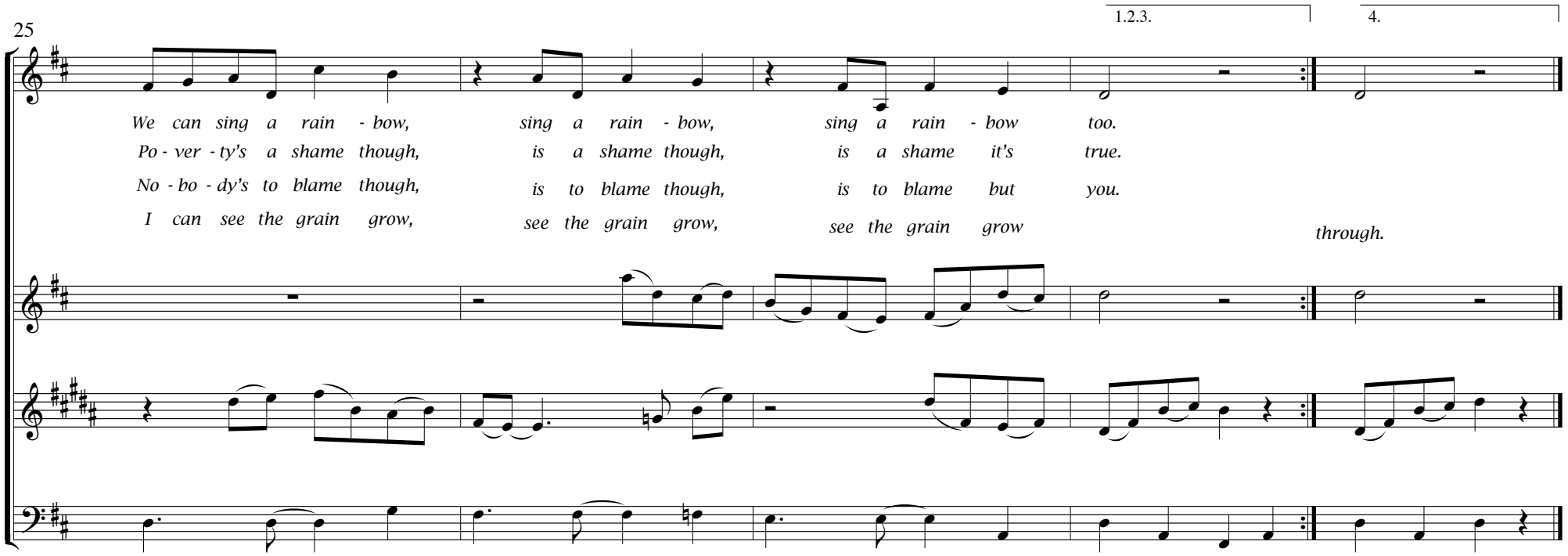
Vs.4 Your very last opportunity to hear a final offering from the wonderful (and totally unique) National Trust Range of Paints Colour Card.

mp

sim.

mp


17
You can sing a rain - bow, sing a rain - bow, sing a rain - bow too.
Po - ver - ty's a shame though, is a shame though, is a shame it's true.
No - bo - dy's to blame though, is to blame though, is to blame but you.
I can see the grain grow, see the grain grow, see the grain grow through.
mf
mp
mf
mp
21
String and Pi - dgeon and Su - gar Bag Light, Li - chen and Pow - der Blue.
Hay and Bis - cuit and Hard - wick White, Buff and Be - rring - ton Blue.
Drab and O - live, Dead Sal - mon and Bone, Down Pipe and Ball - room Blue.
Eating Room Red and Lon - don Stone, Fow - ler Pink, Cane and Hague Blue.


25
1.2.3.
4.
We can sing a rain - bow, sing a rain - bow, sing a rain - bow too.
Po - ver - ty's a shame though, is a shame though, is a shame it's true.
No - bo - dy's to blame though, is to blame though, is to blame but you.
I can see the grain grow, see the grain grow, see the grain grow through.

I took a train . . .

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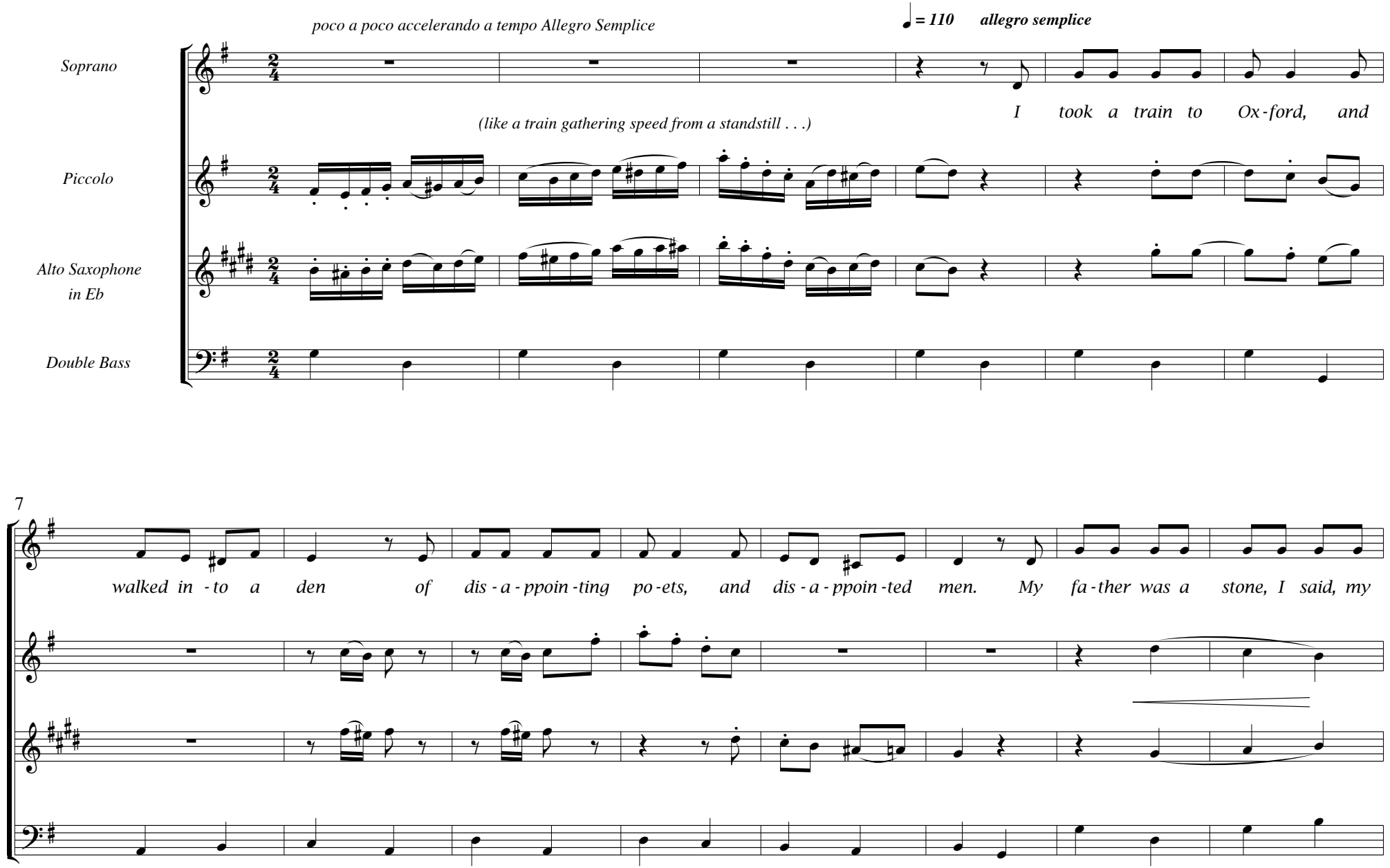
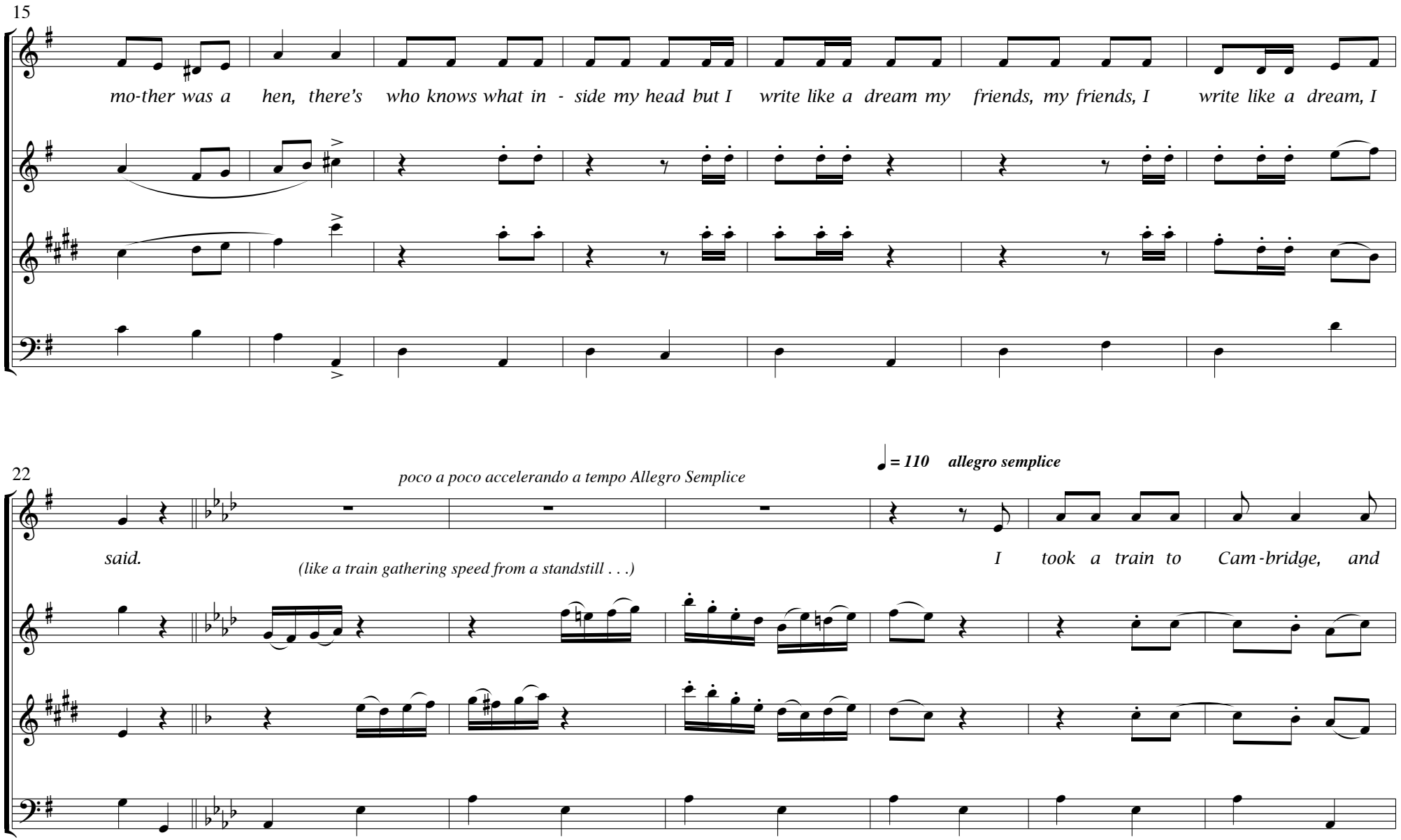
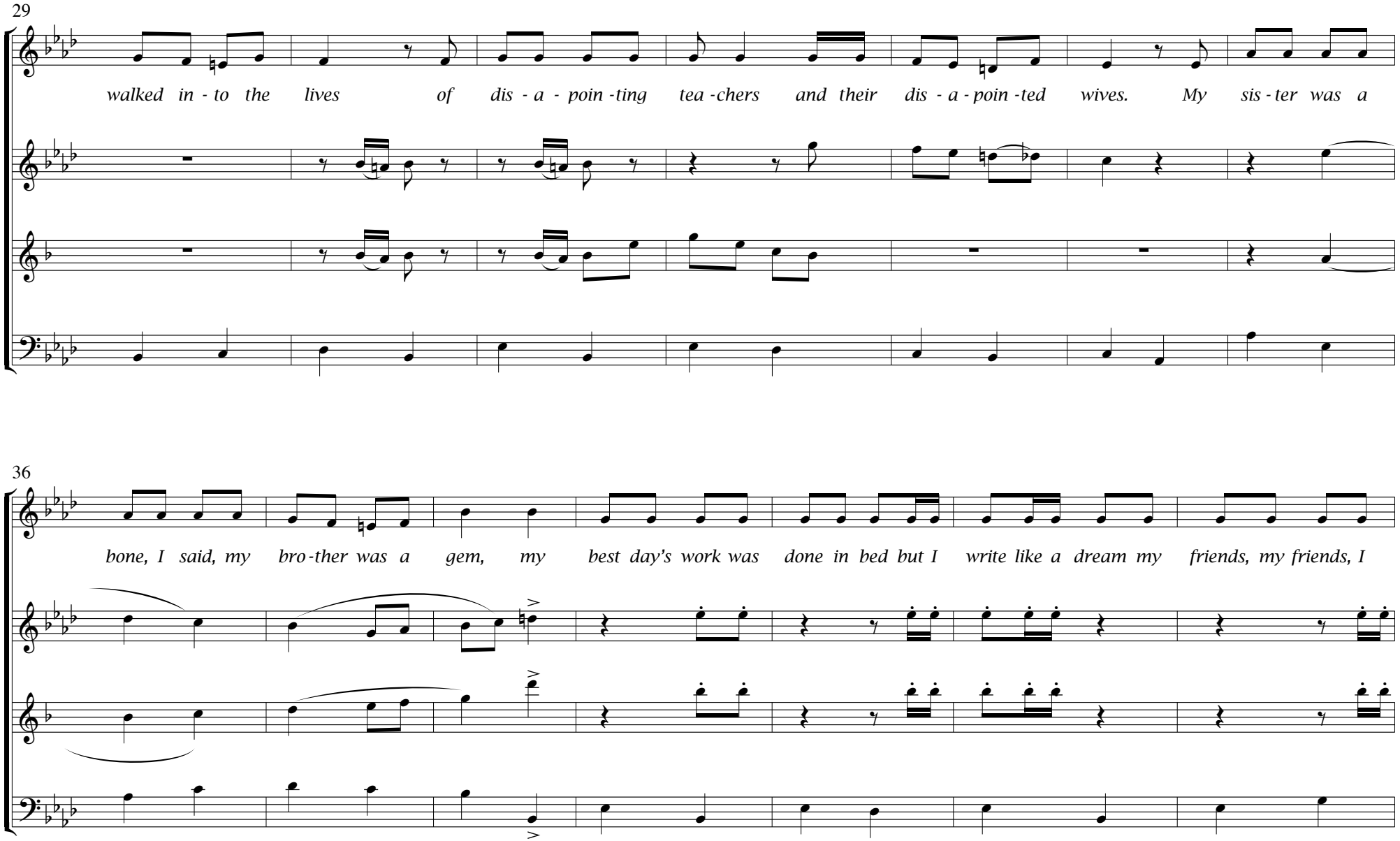
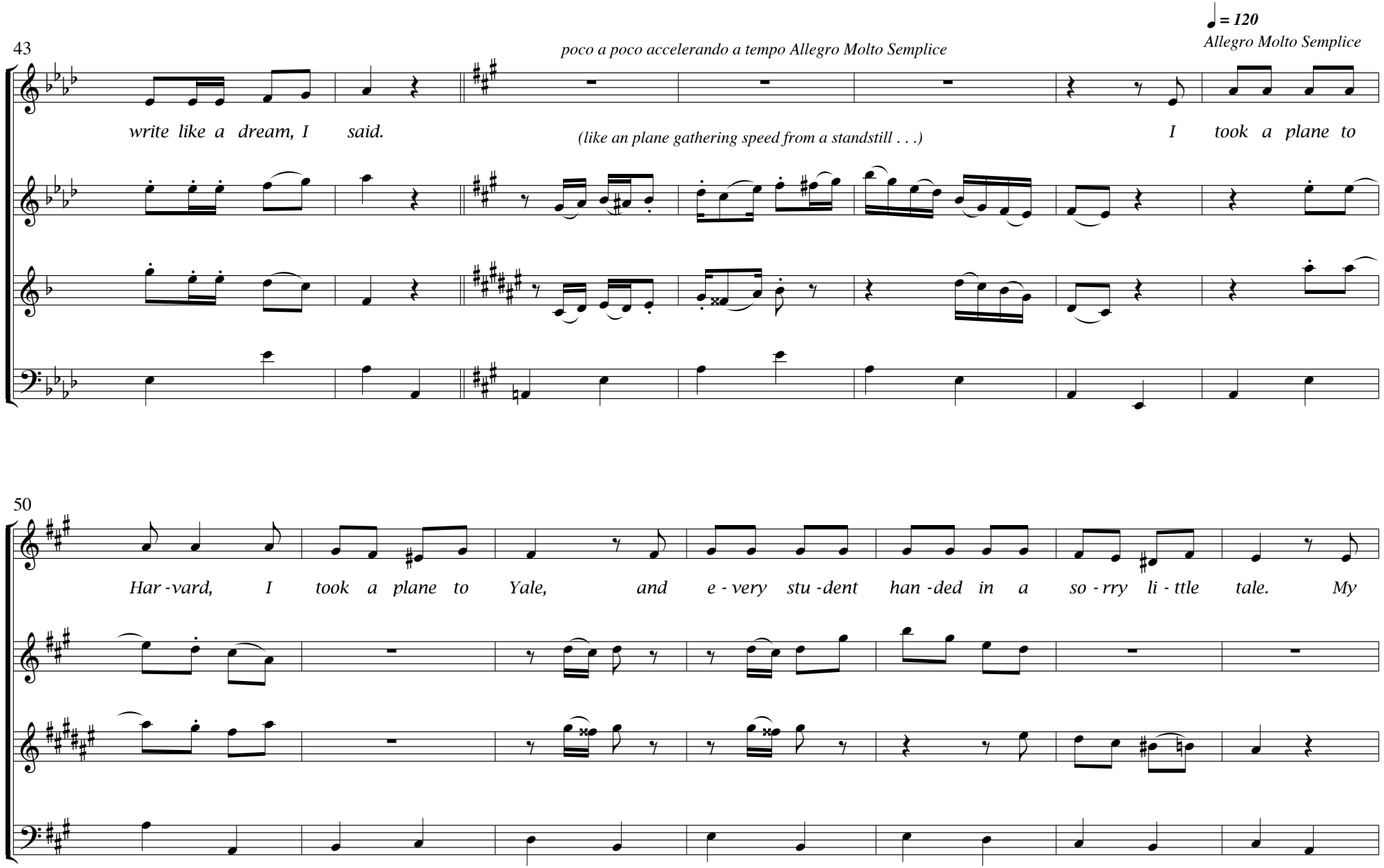
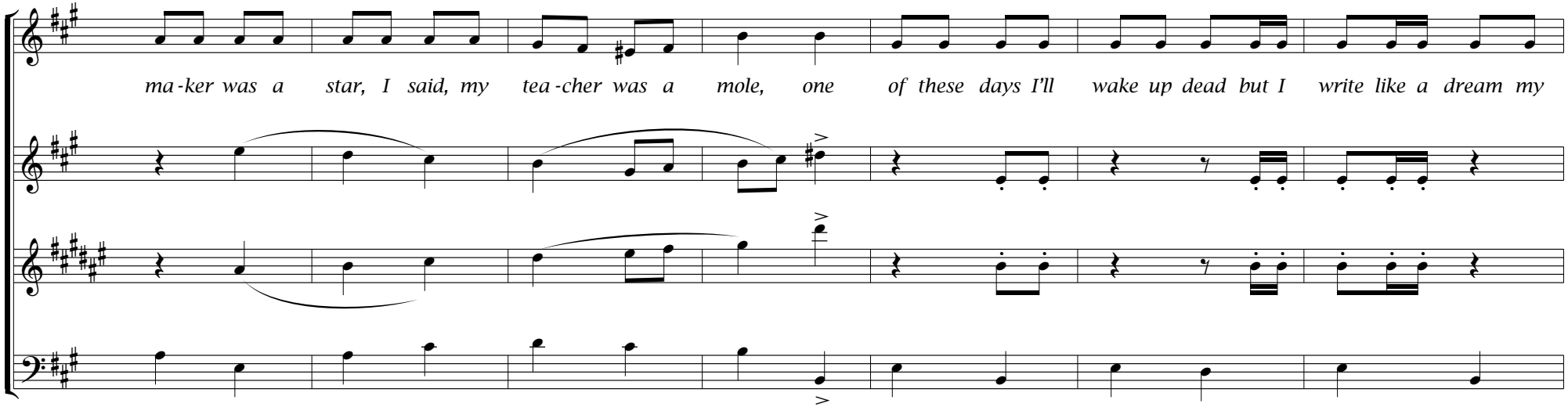



15
mo-ther was a hen, there's who knows what in - side my head but I write like a dream my friends, my friends, I write like a dream, I
22
poco a poco accelerando a tempo Allegro Semplice
♩ = 110 allegro semplice
said.
(like a train gathering speed from a standstill . . .)
I took a train to Cam-bridge, and


29
walked in - to the lives of dis - a - poin - ting tea - chers and their dis - a - poin - ted wives. My sis - ter was a
36
bone, I said, my bro - ther was a gem, my best day's work was done in bed but I write like a dream my friends, my friends, I

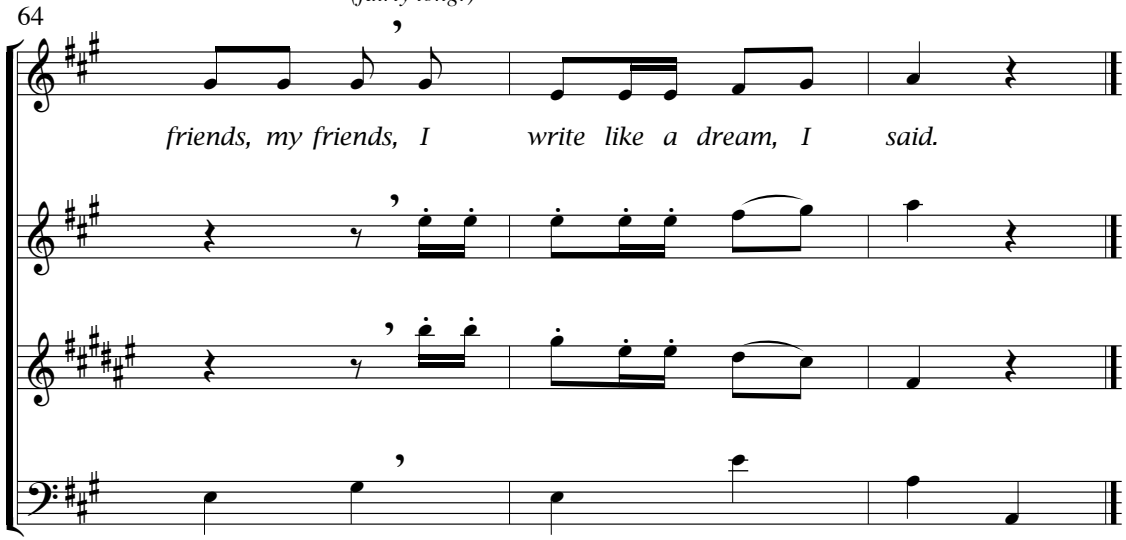

43
poco a poco accelerando a tempo Allegro Molto Semplice
♩ = 120
Allegro Molto Semplice
write like a dream, I said.
(like an plane gathering speed from a standstill . . .)
I took a plane to
50
Har - vard, I took a plane to Yale, and e - very stu - dent han - ded in a so - rry li - ttle tale. My

57



64

(fairly long!)



For Megan-Ruth