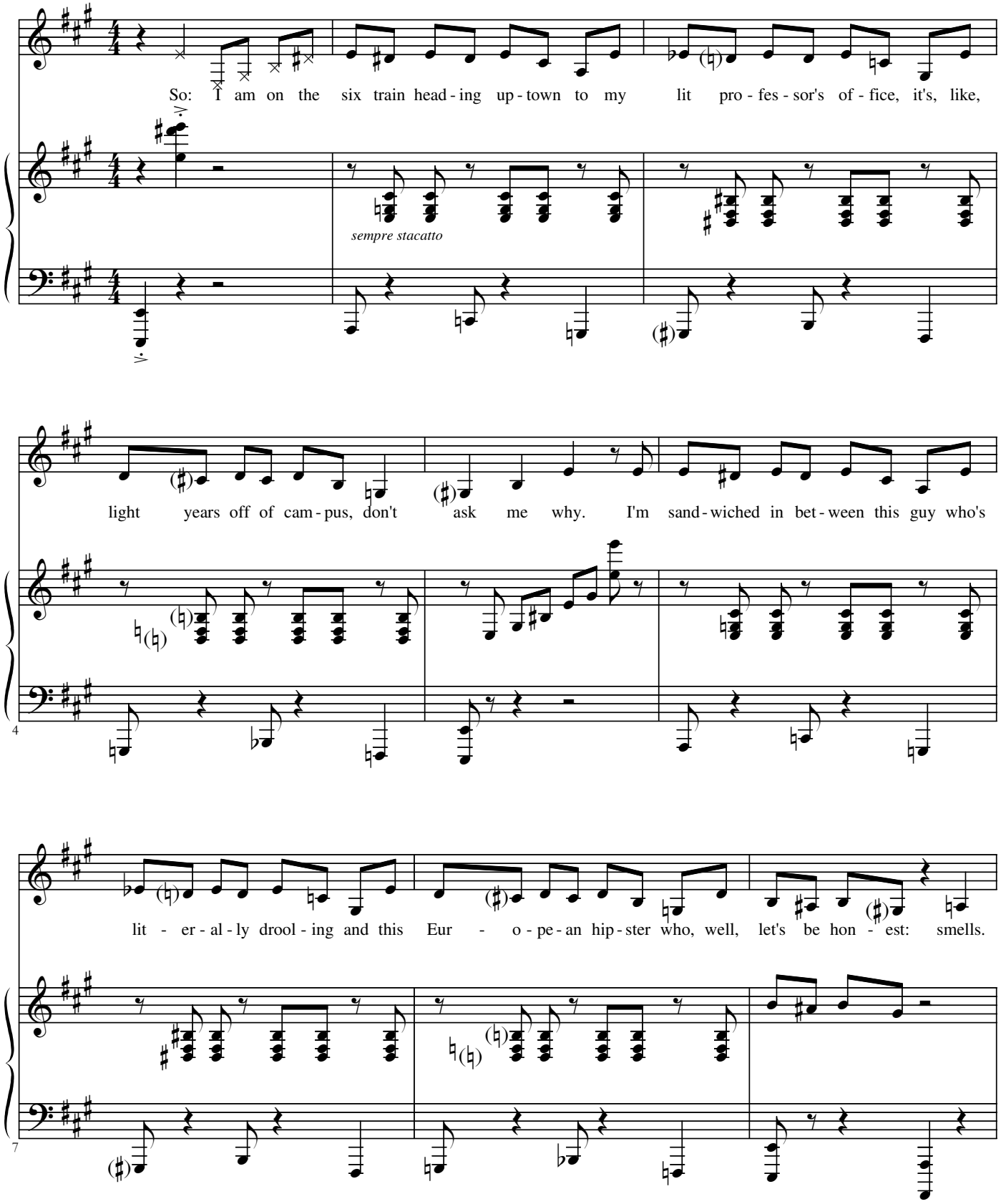
No. 13

Calm

Deb

music and lyrics by Adam Gwon

Fast, breathlessly



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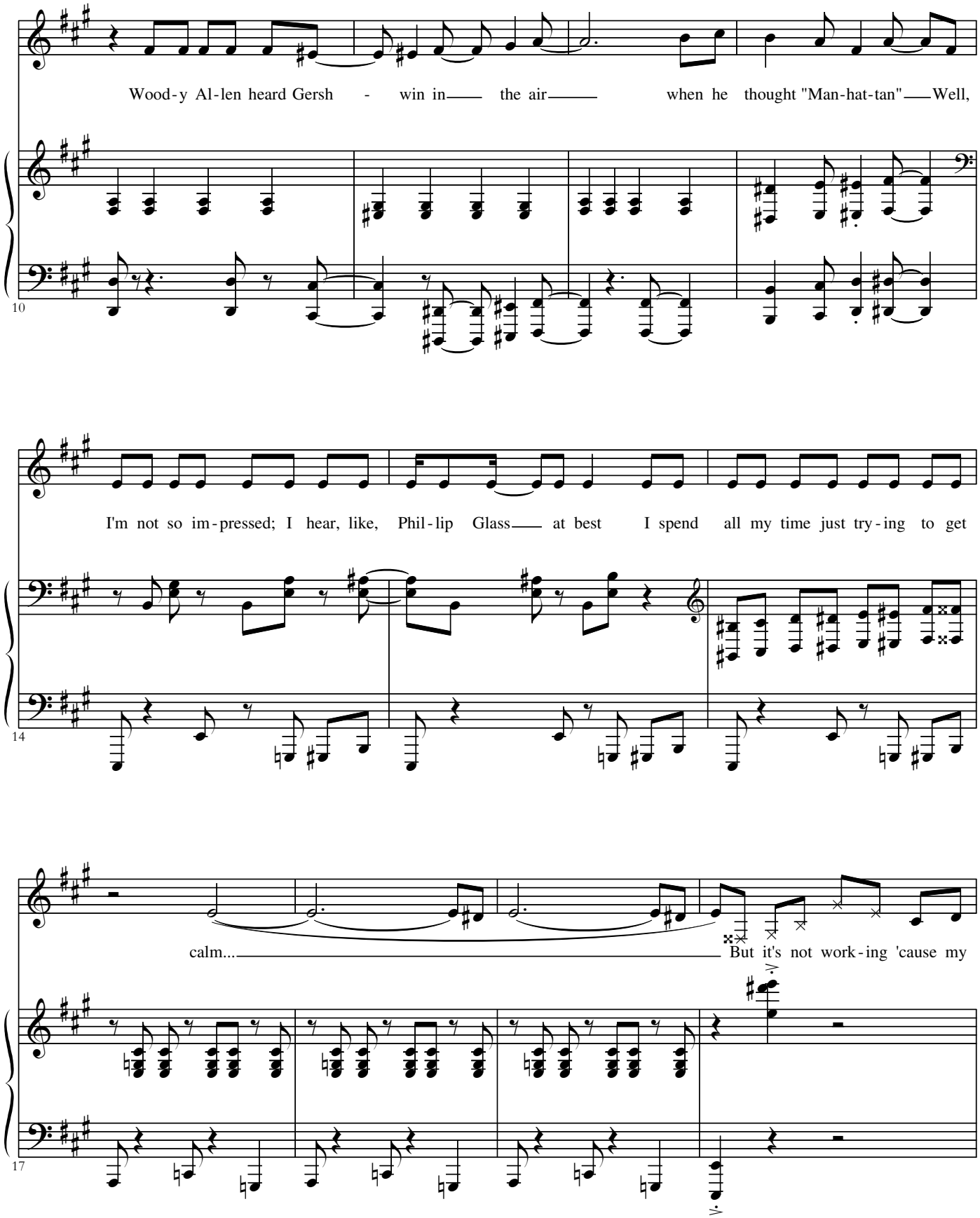
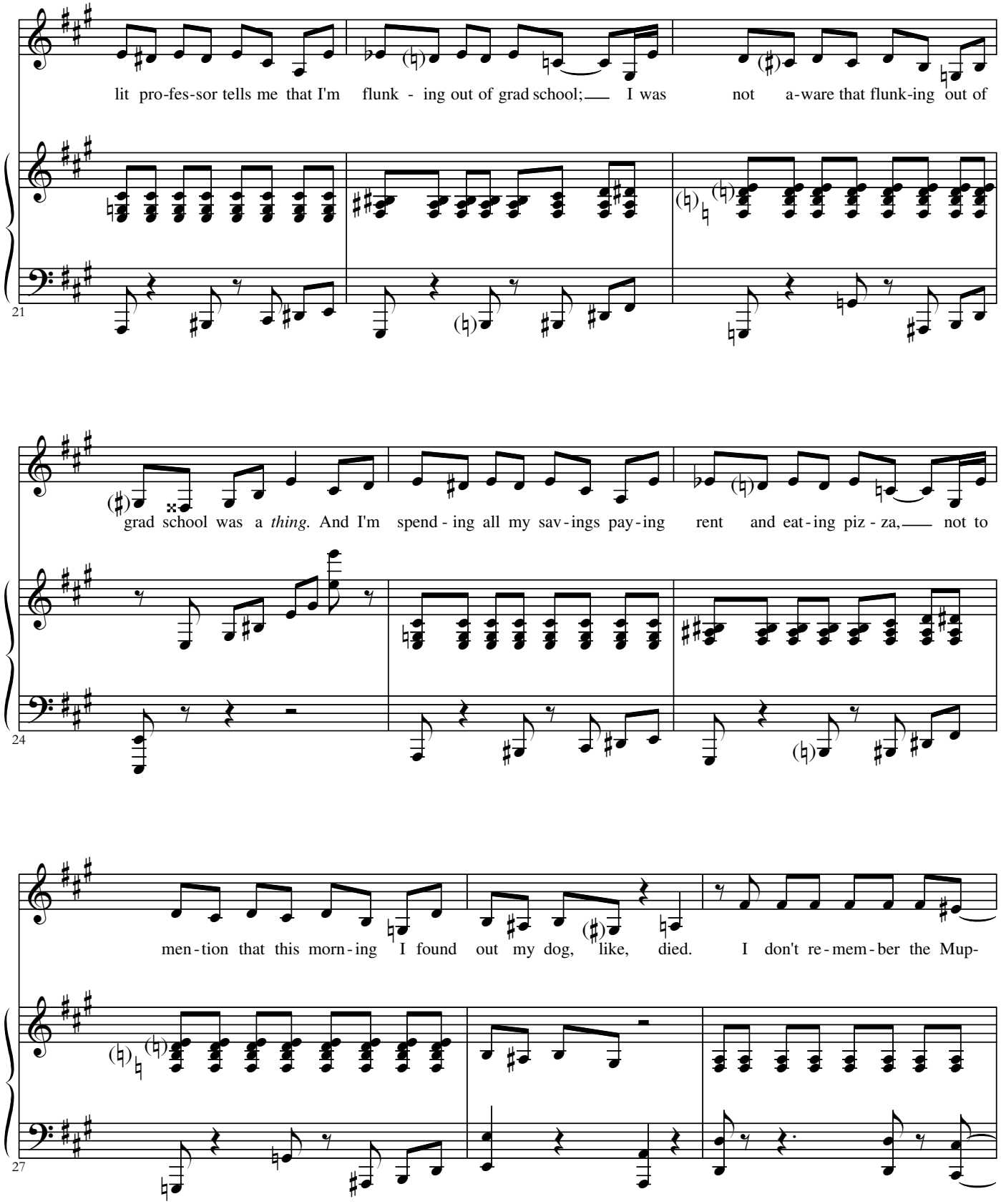
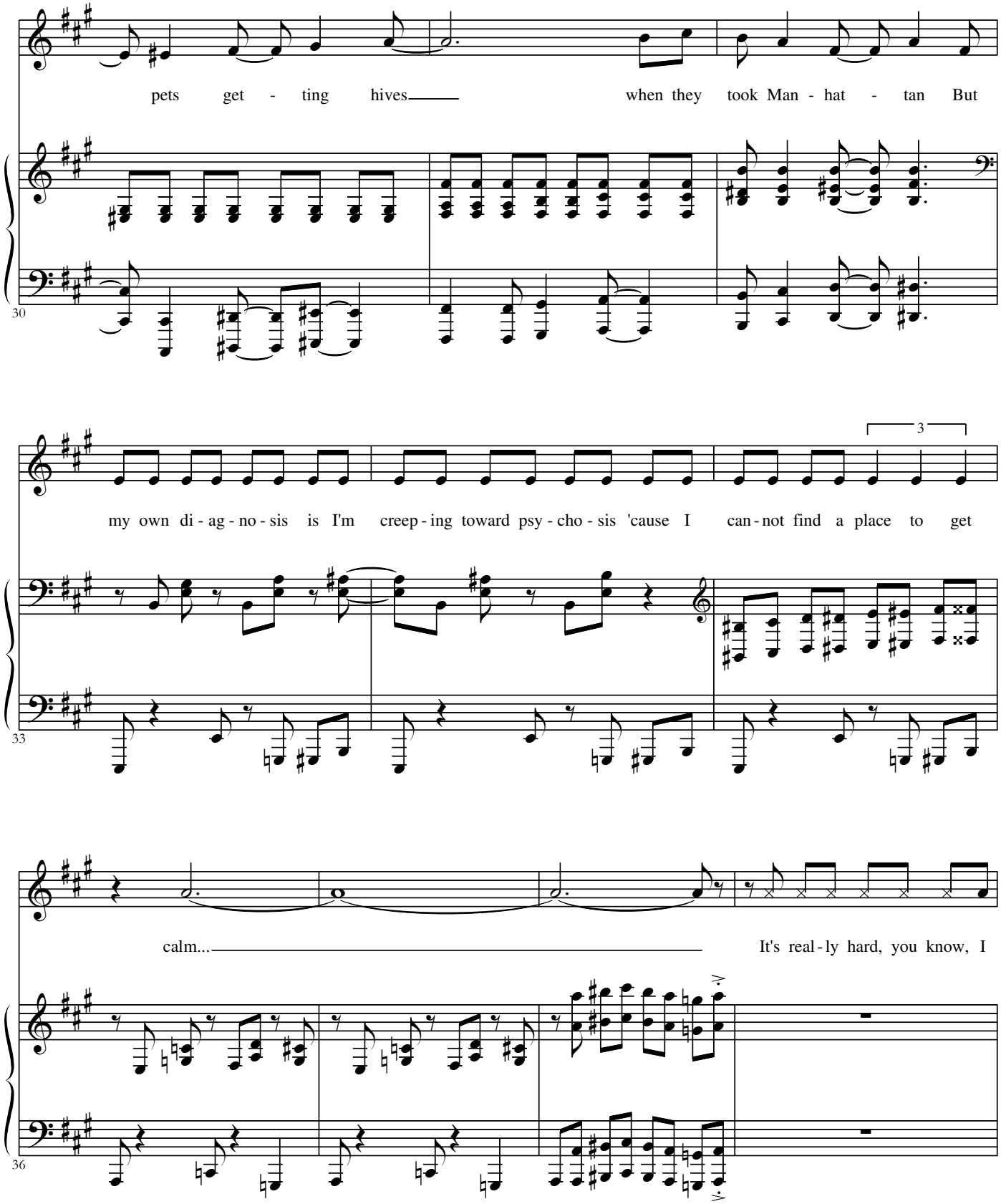
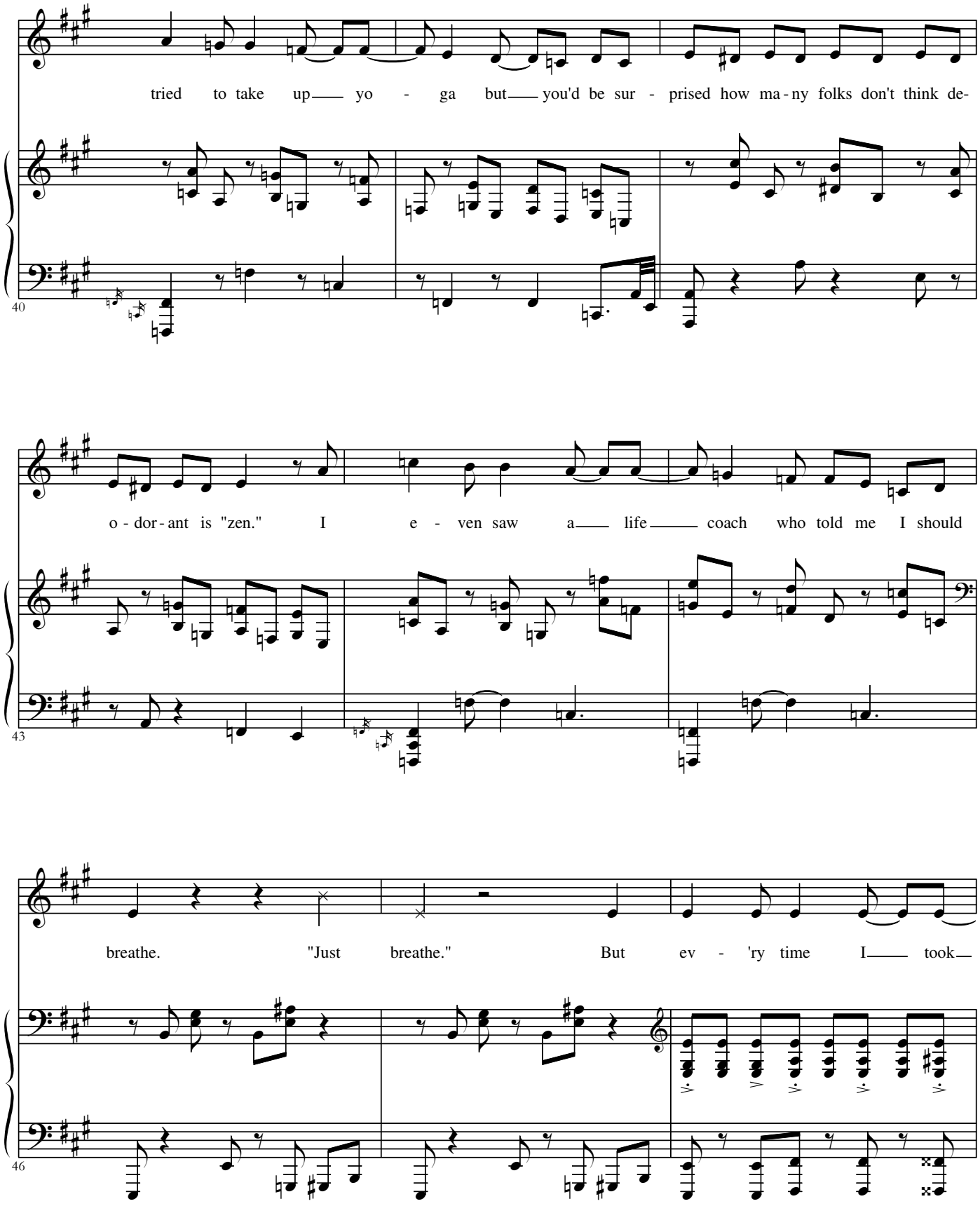
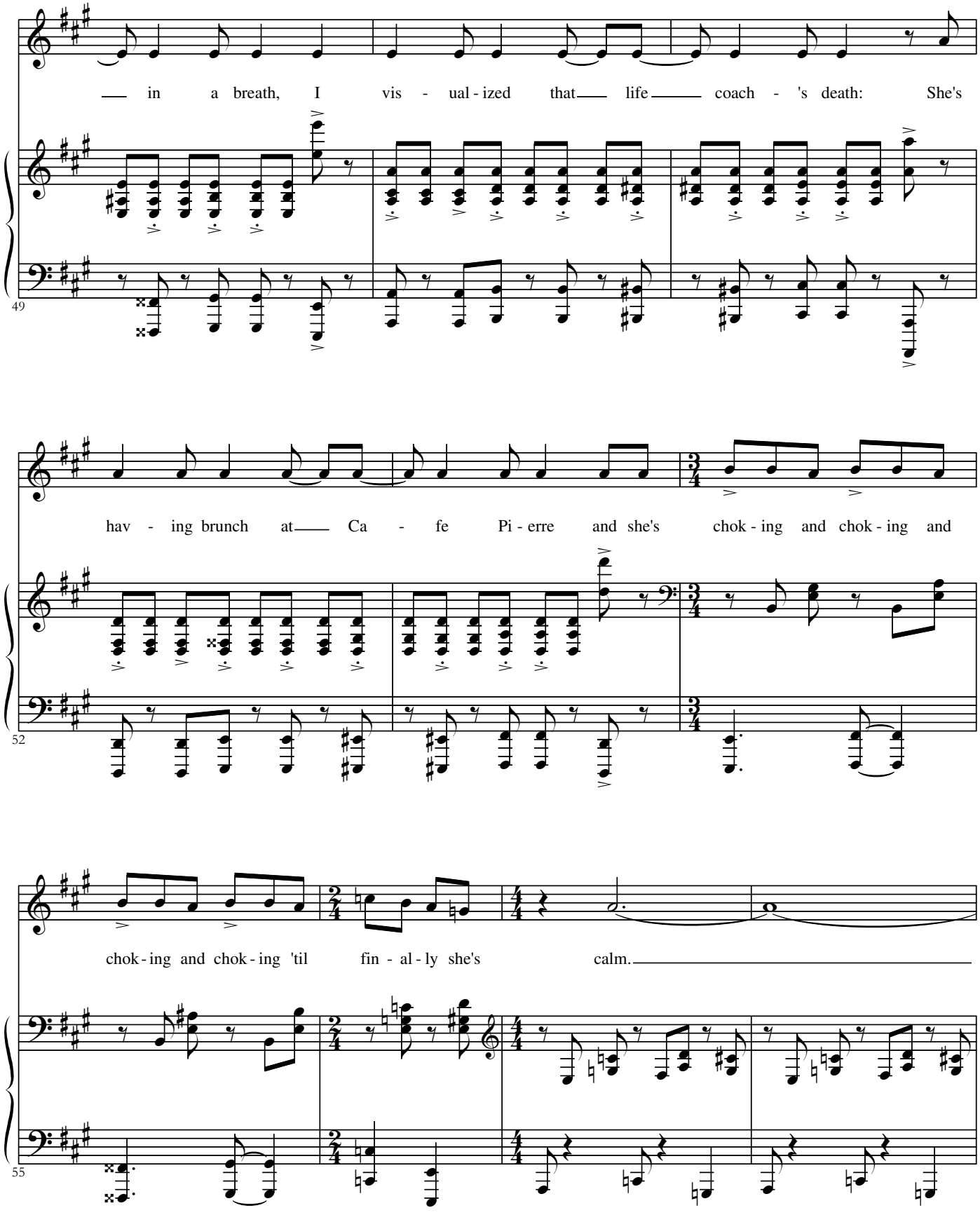
9/14/2008

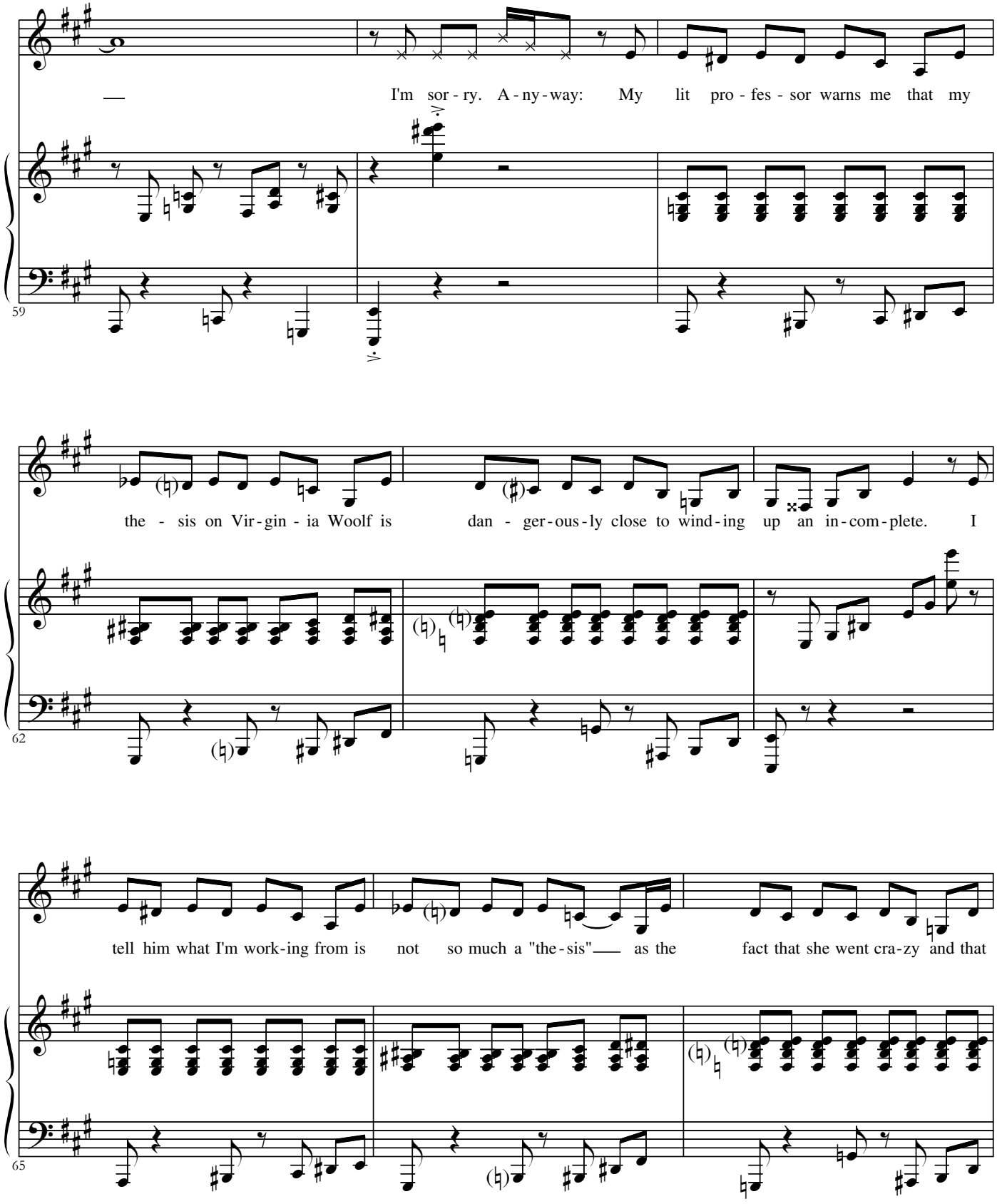

Wood-y Al-len heard Gersh - win in the air when he thought "Man-hat-tan" Well,
10
I'm not so im-pressed; I hear, like, Phil-lip Glass at best I spend all my time just try-ing to get
14
calm... But it's not work-ing 'cause my
17

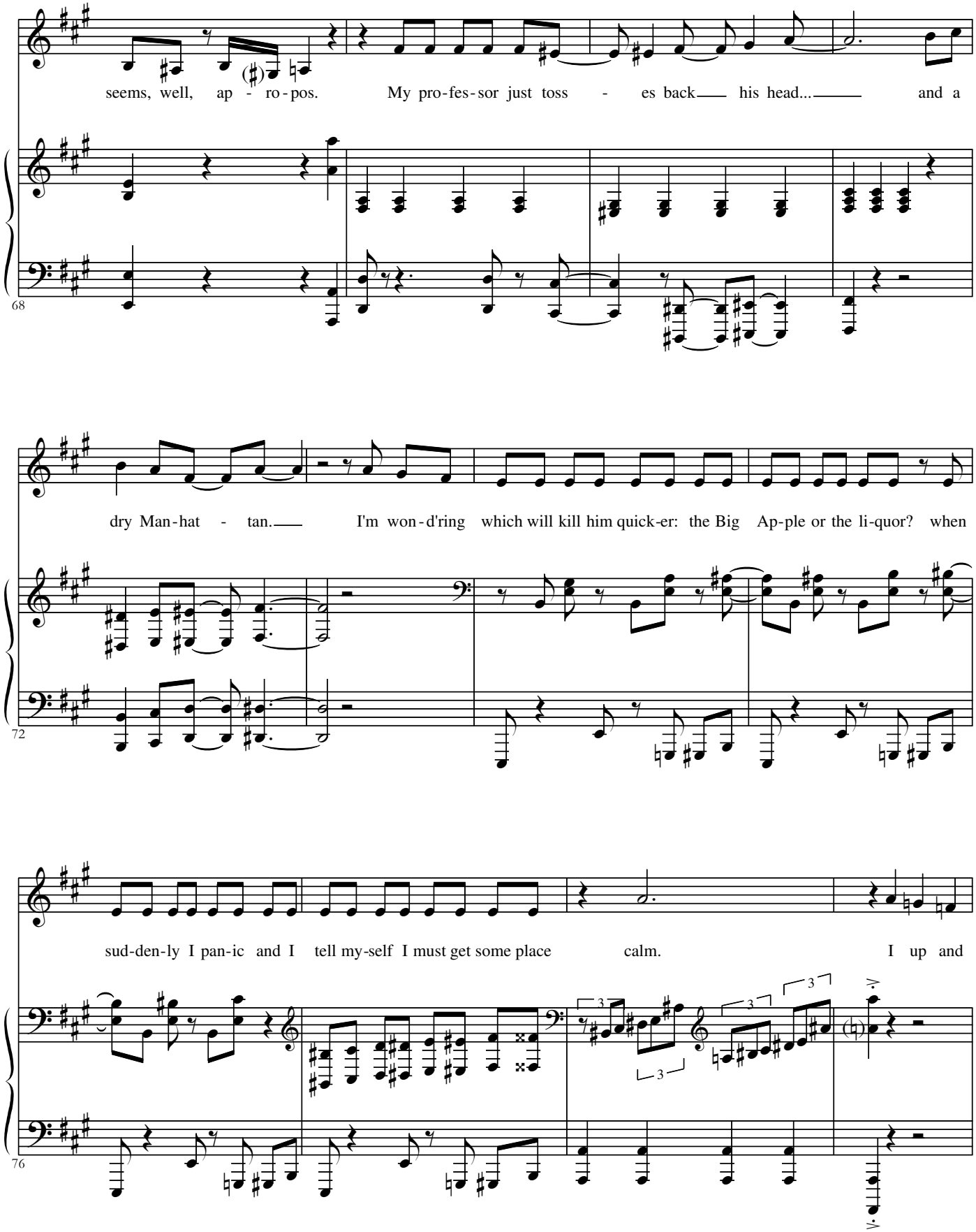

lit pro-fes-sor tells me that I'm flunk - ing out of grad school; I was not a-ware that flunk-ing out of
21
grad school was a *thing*. And I'm spend - ing all my sav - ings pay - ing rent and eat - ing piz - za, not to
24
men - tion that this morn - ing I found out my dog, like, died. I don't re - mem - ber the Mup-
27

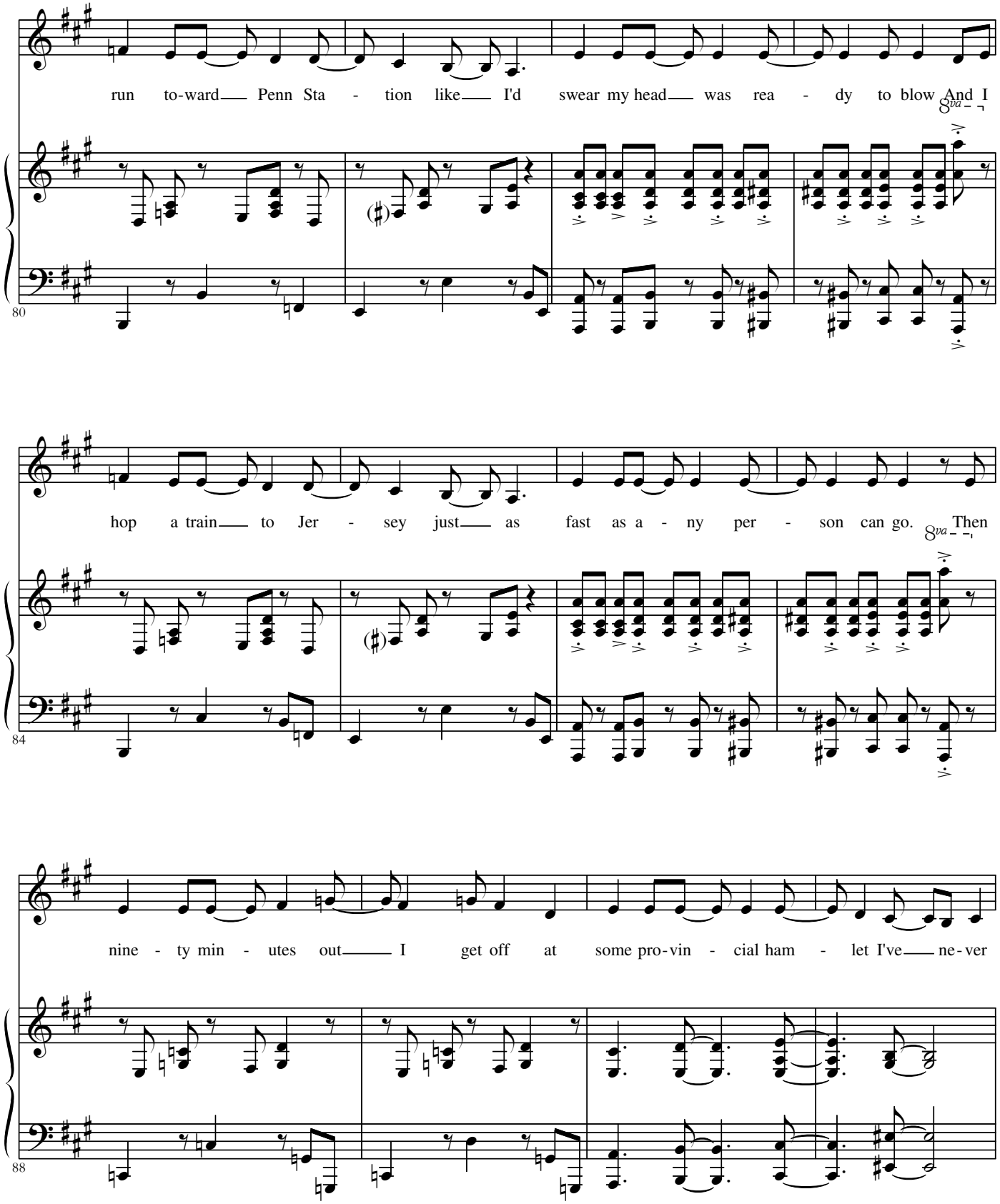

pets get - ting hives when they took Man - hat - tan But
30
3
my own di - ag - no - sis is I'm creep - ing toward psy - cho - sis 'cause I can - not find a place to get
33
calm... It's real - ly hard, you know, I
36

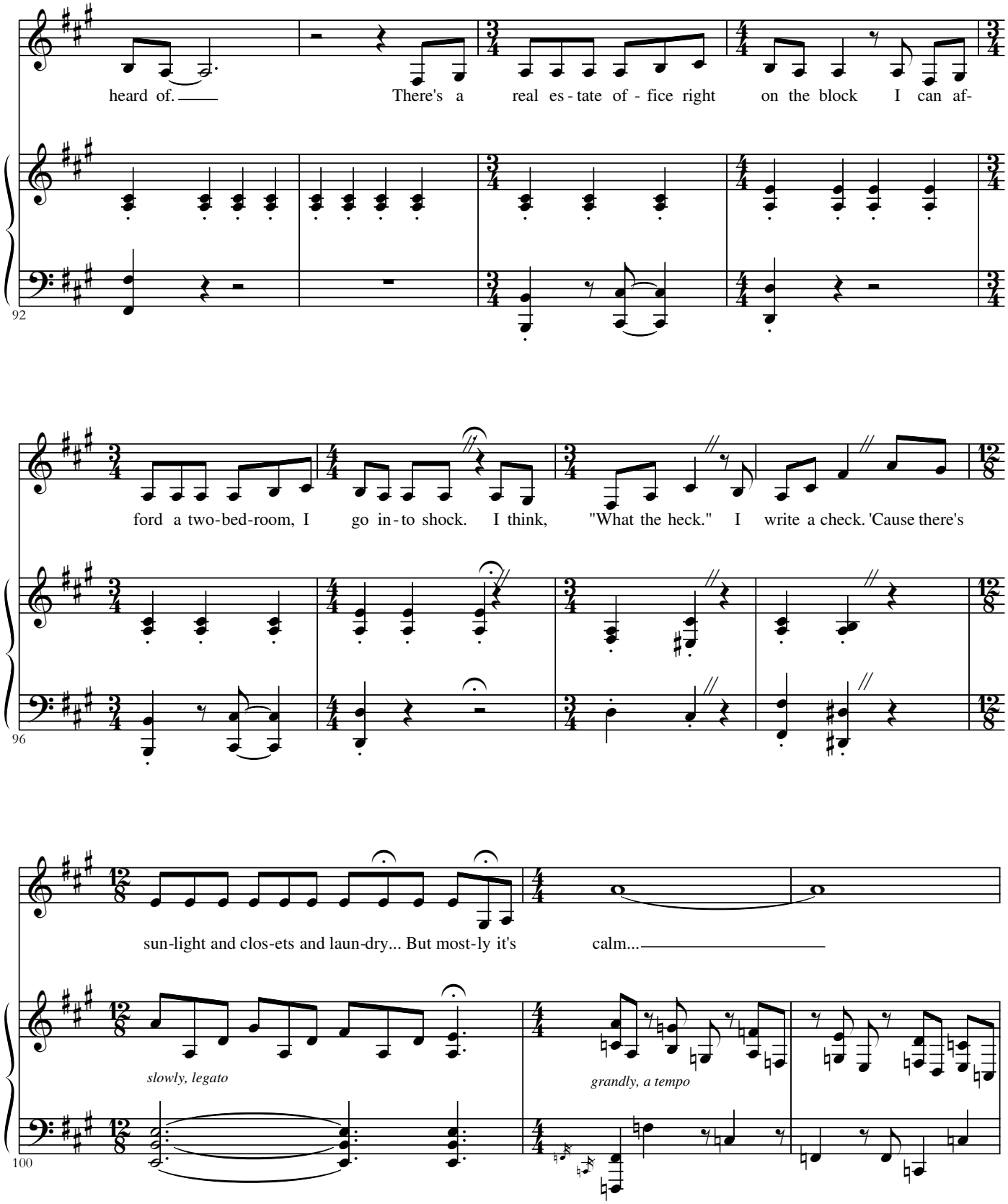

tried to take up yo - ga but you'd be sur - prised how ma - ny folks don't think de-
40
o - dor - ant is "zen." I e - ven saw a life coach who told me I should
43
breathe. "Just breathe." But ev - 'ry time I took
46

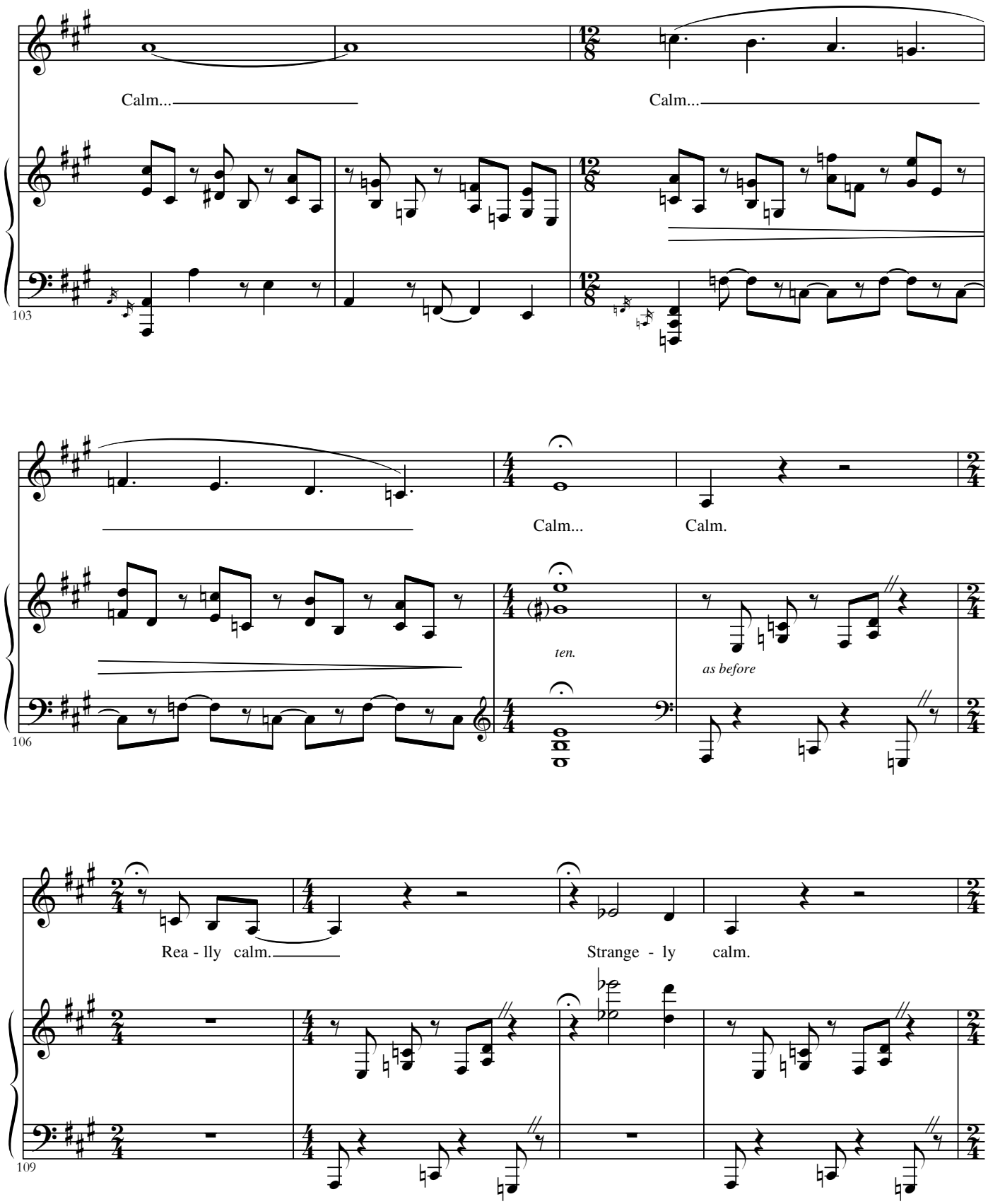

49
in a breath, I vis - ual - ized that life coach - 's death: She's
52
hav - ing brunch at Ca - fe Pi - erre and she's chok - ing and chok - ing and
55
chok - ing and chok - ing 'til fin - al - ly she's calm.

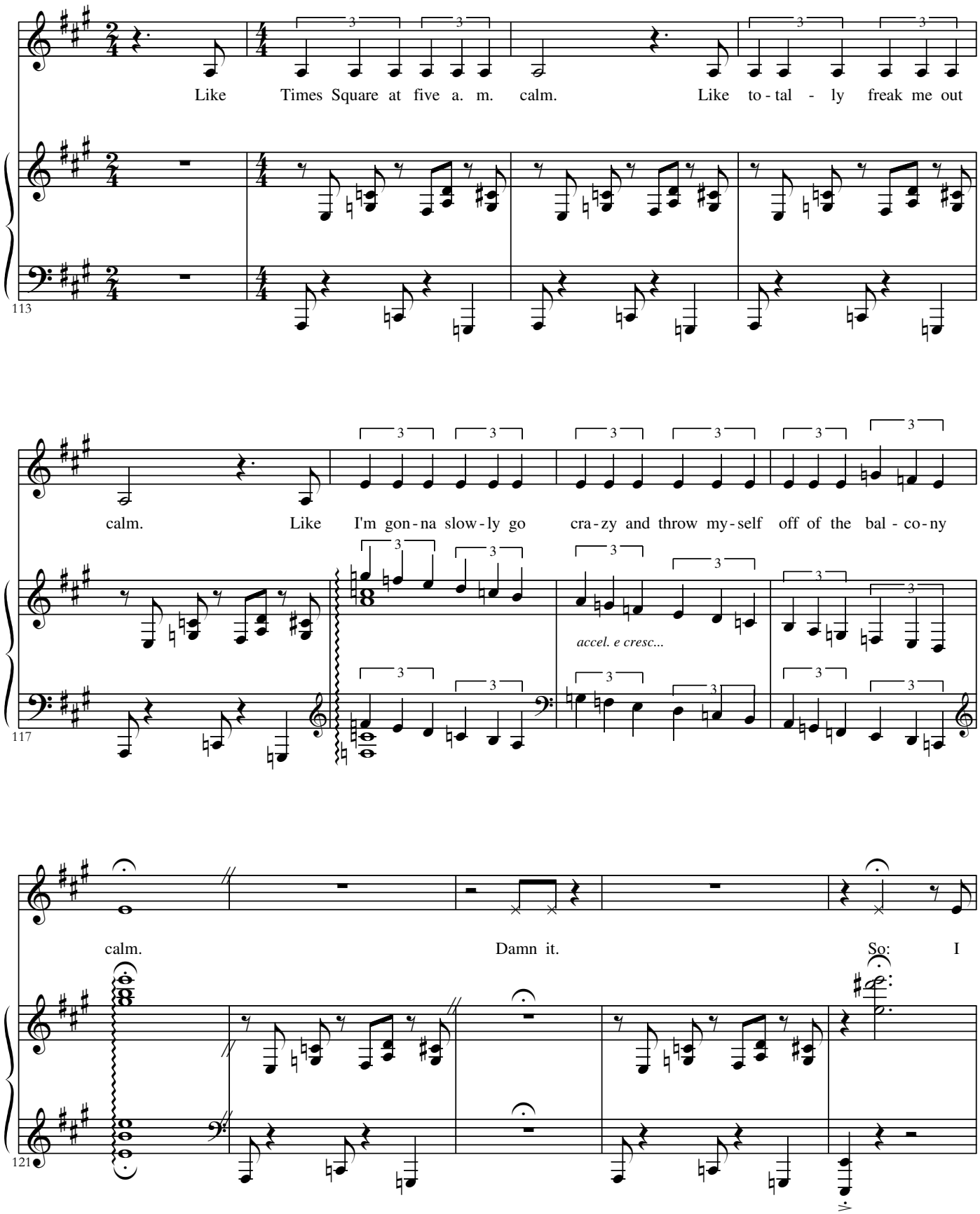

I'm sor - ry. A - ny - way: My lit pro - fes - sor warns me that my
59
the - sis on Vir - gin - ia Woolf is dan - ger - ous - ly close to wind - ing up an in - com - plete. I
62
tell him what I'm work - ing from is not so much a "the - sis" as the fact that she went cra - zy and that
65

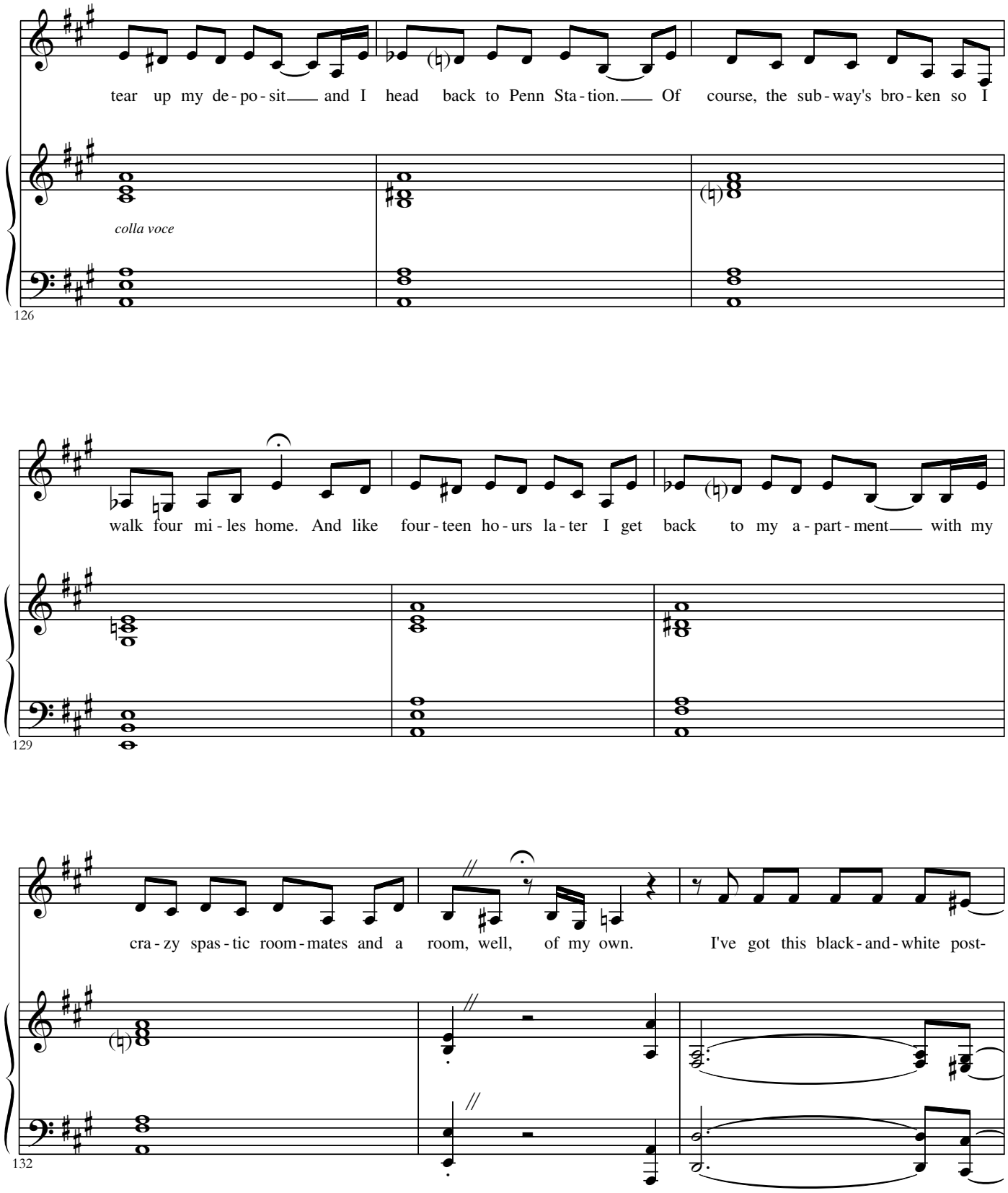

seems, well, ap - ro - pos. My pro-fes-sor just toss - es back his head... and a
68
dry Man-hat - tan. I'm won-d'ring which will kill him quick-er: the Big Ap-ple or the li-quor? when
72
sud-den-ly I pan-ic and I tell my-self I must get some place calm. I up and
76

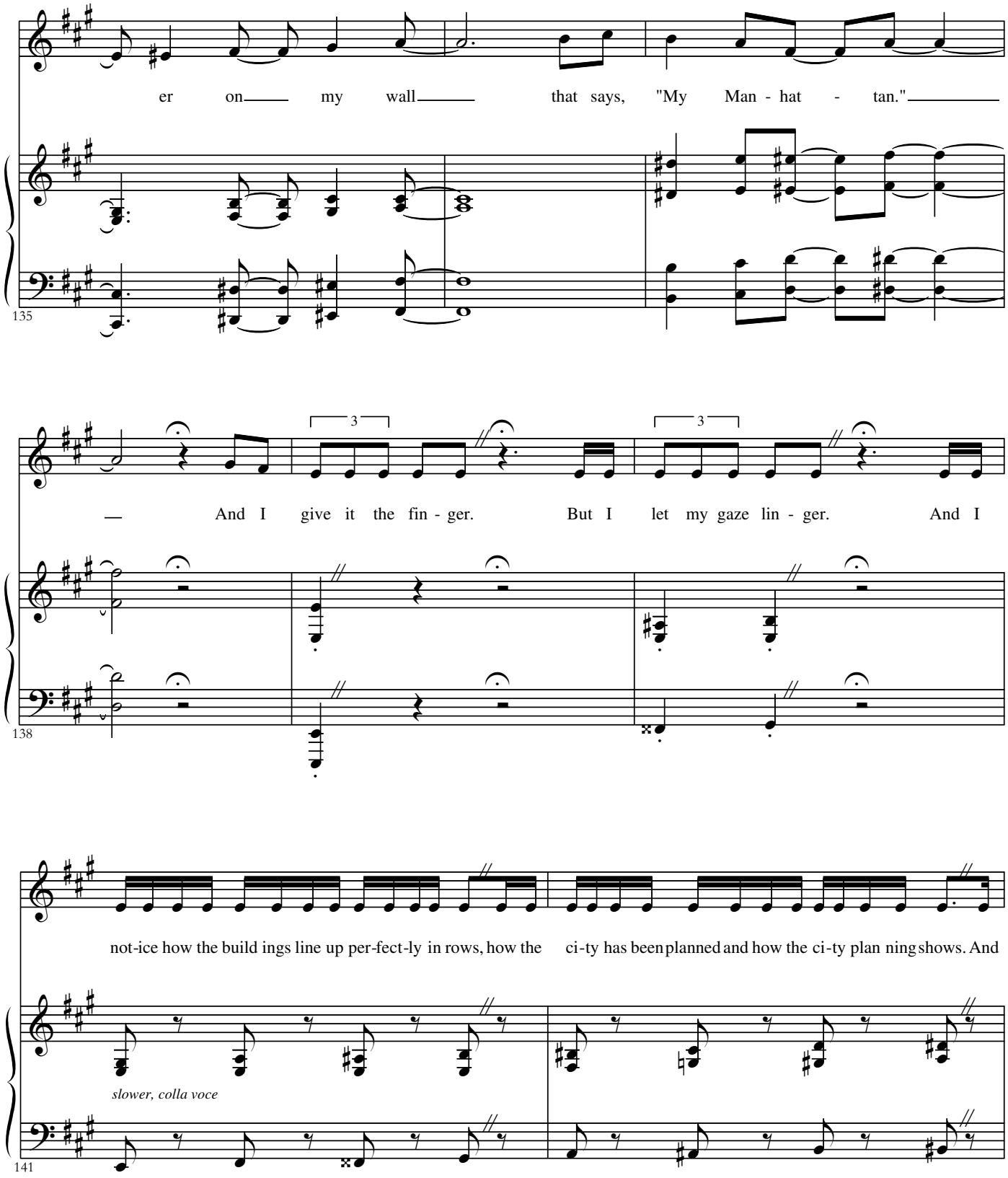

run to-ward Penn Sta - tion like I'd swear my head was rea - dy to blow And I
8va
80
hop a train to Jer - sey just as fast as a - ny per - son can go. Then
8va
84
nine - ty min - utes out I get off at some pro-vin - cial ham - let I've ne-ver
88

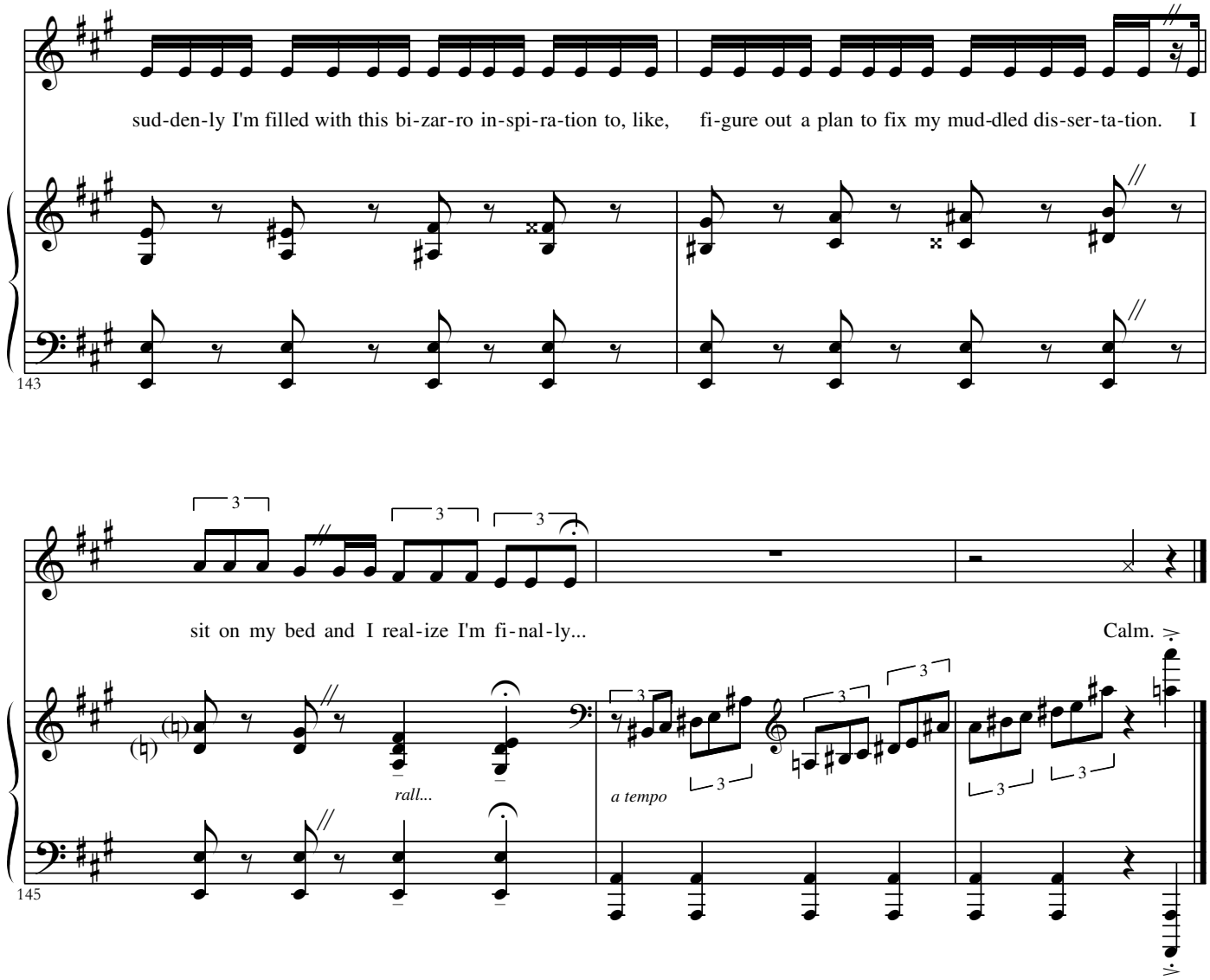

heard of. There's a real es-tate of-fice right on the block I can af-
92
ford a two-bed-room, I go in-to shock. I think, "What the heck." I write a check. 'Cause there's
96
sun-light and clos-ets and laun-dry... But most-ly it's calm...
slowly, legato
grandly, a tempo
100


Calm...
Calm...
103
Calm...
Calm.
ten.
as before
106
Rea - lly calm.
Strange - ly calm.
109


Like Times Square at five a. m. calm. Like to - tal - ly freak me out
113
calm. Like I'm gon - na slow - ly go cra - zy and throw my - self off of the bal - co - ny
accel. e cresc...
117
calm. Damn it. So: I
121


tear up my de-po-sit and I head back to Penn Sta-tion. Of course, the sub-way's bro-ken so I
colla voce
126
walk four mi-les home. And like four-teen ho-urs la-ter I get back to my a-part-ment with my
129
cra-zy spas-tic room-mates and a room, well, of my own. I've got this black-and-white post-
132


er on my wall that says, "My Man - hat - tan."
135
And I give it the fin - ger. But I let my gaze lin - ger. And I
138
not-ice how the build ings line up per-fect-ly in rows, how the ci-ty has been planned and how the ci-ty plan ning shows. And
slower, colla voce
141


sud-den-ly I'm filled with this bi-zar-ro in-spi-ra-tion to, like, fi-gure out a plan to fix my mud-dled dis-ser-ta-tion. I
143
sit on my bed and I real-ize I'm fi-nal-ly...
Calm.
rall...
a tempo
145