Jay C. Batzner

Selecting a Reader /A Widow

(2012)

for mezzo-soprano and bass line

UNSAFE BULL MUSIC

Program Notes:

I have this collection of poetry from Pitt Press that I've been reading and reading since about 1992. A few poems by Ted Kooser caught my mind and I filed them away for a future text setting. When Katherine Crawford asked me to write a piece for her and electronics, I decided to finally act on these poems. The two poems, "Selecting a Reader" and "A Widow," are set in a continuous musical framework even though there is no programatic reason or connection between the two.

Performance Note:

While I originally composed this work for voice and synth, I feel like this piece would work well for piano or any instrument that can play a bass line. When the octaves appear in measures 49, 59, and so on, perform some kind of meaningful flourish if performing on a monophonic instrument.

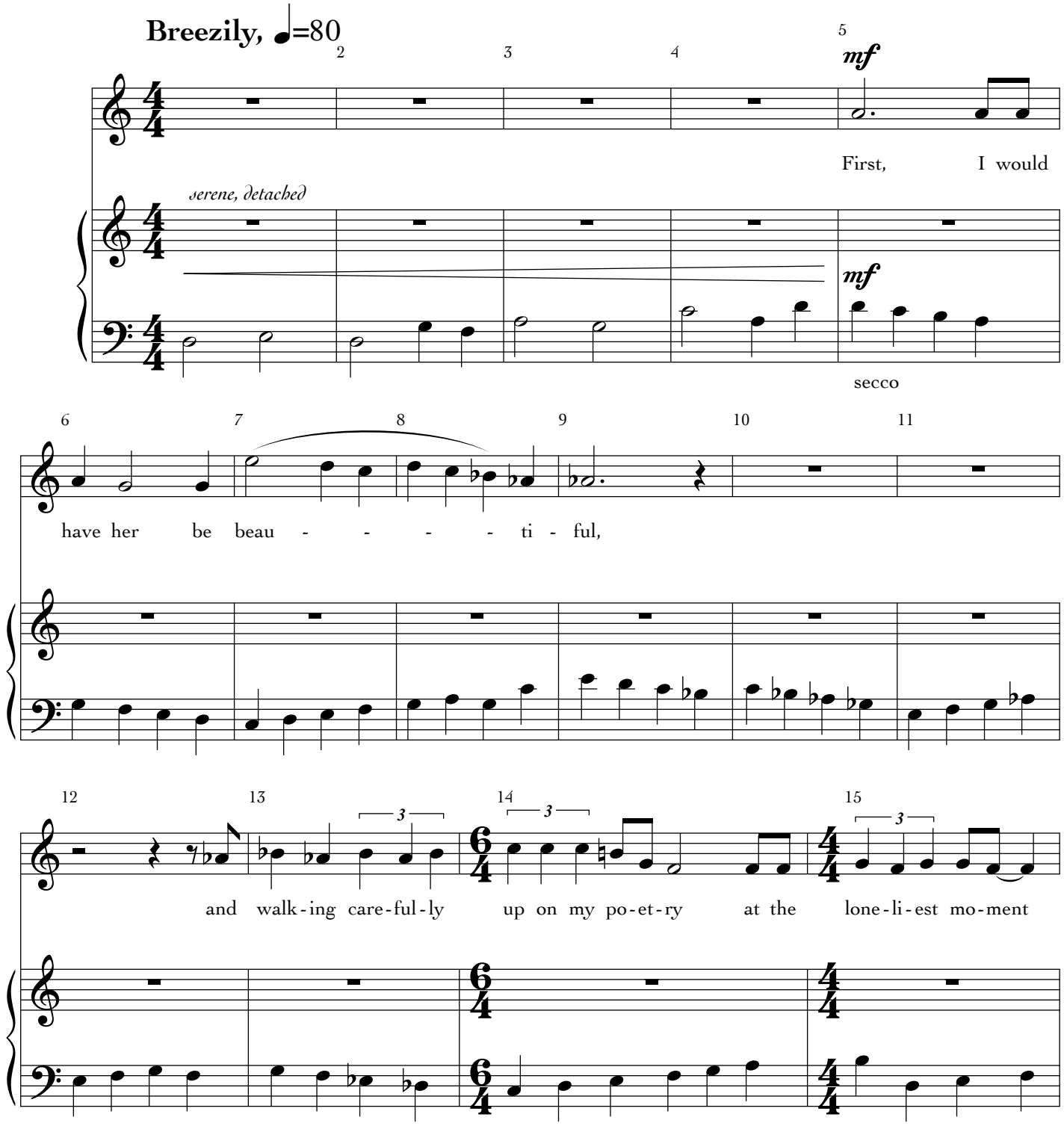
Lyrics from the poem "Selecting a Reader" from *Sure Signs: New and Selected Poems,* by Ted Kooser, © 1980. All rights controlled by the University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, PA 15260. Used by permission of University of Pittsburgh Press.

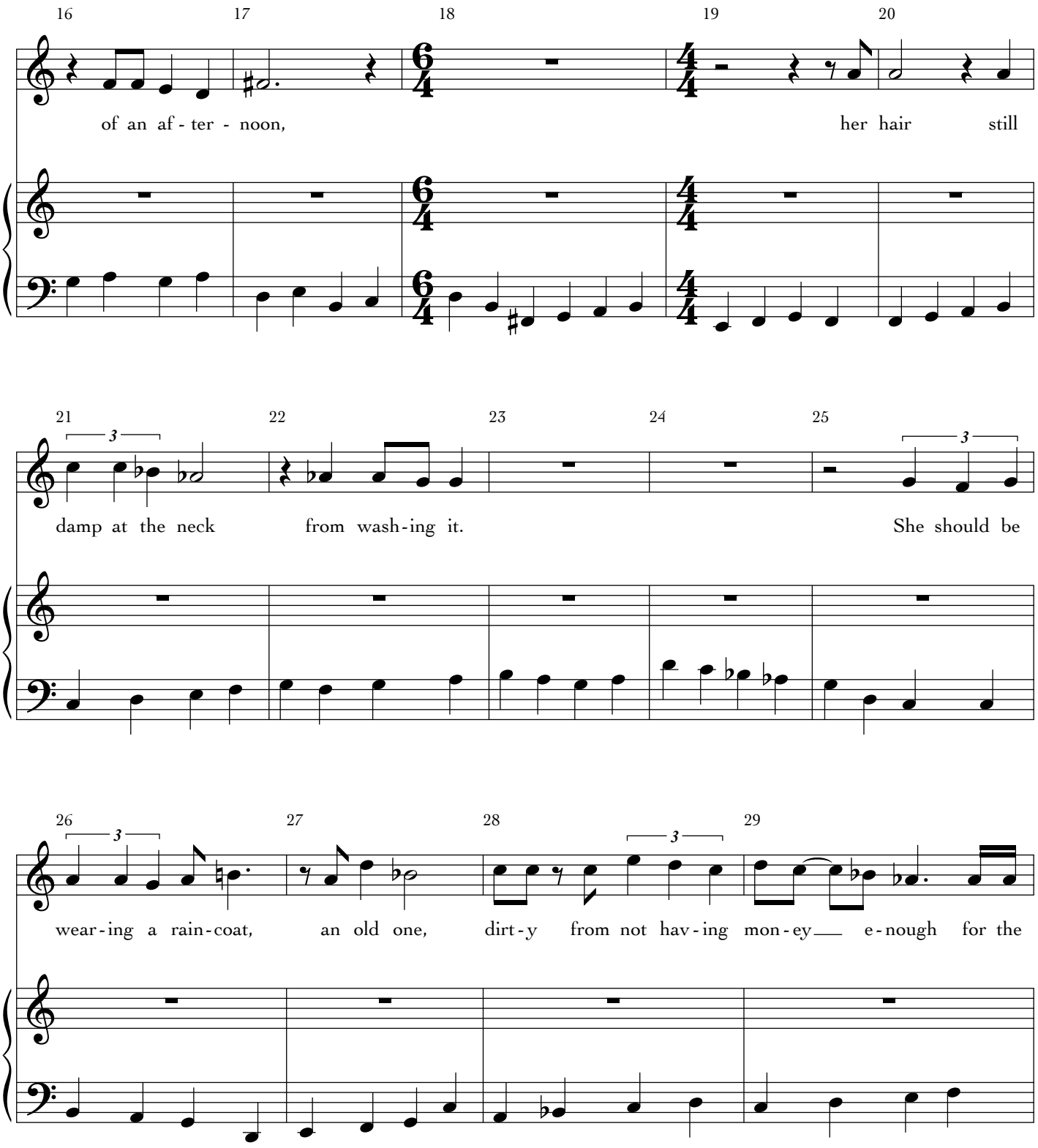
Lyrics from the poem "A Widow" from *Flying and Night: Poems 1965-1985,* by Ted Kooser, © 2005. All rights controlled by the University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, PA 15260. Used by permission of University of Pittsburgh Press.

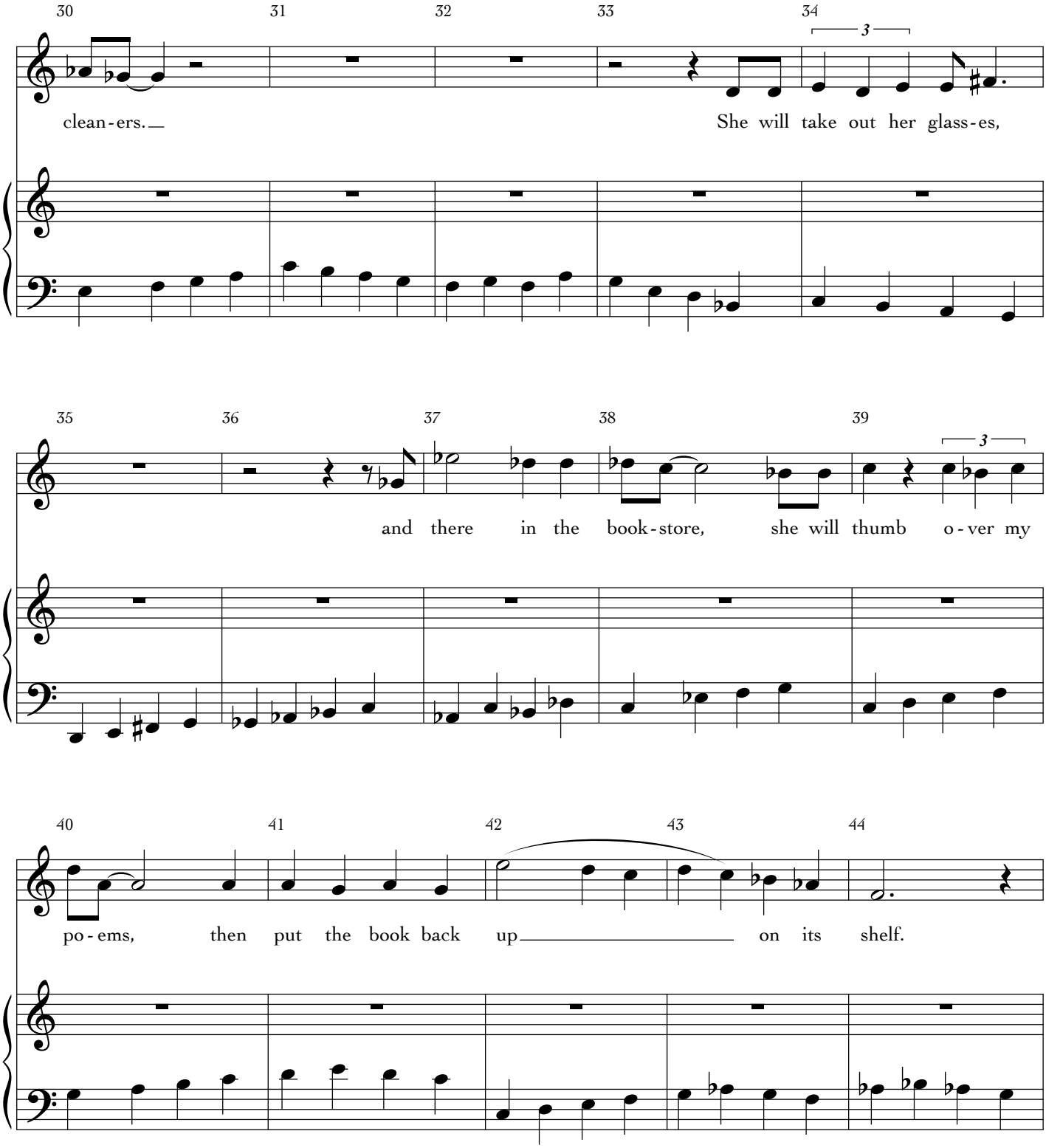
Selecting a Reader/A Widow

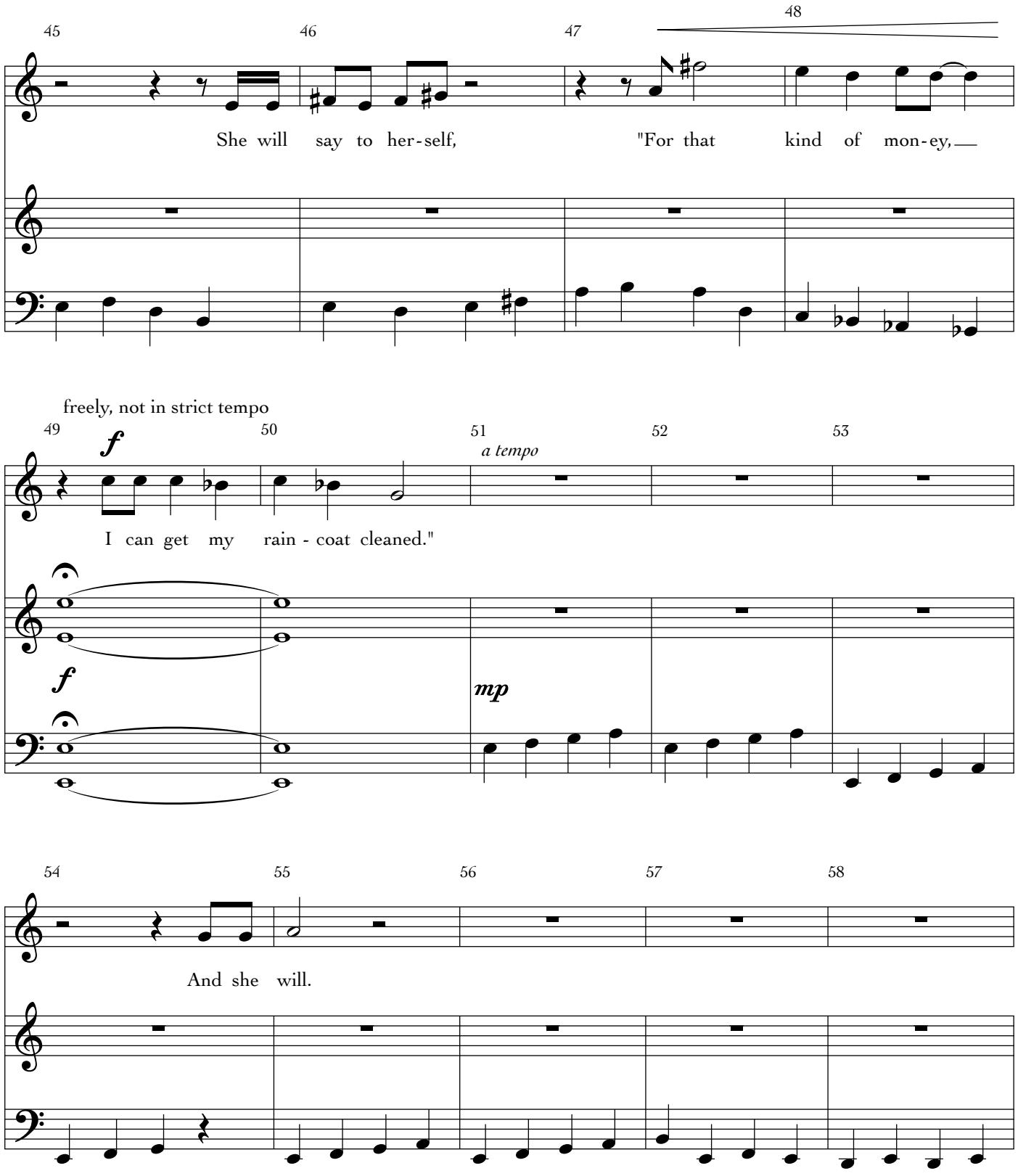
for Katherine Crawford

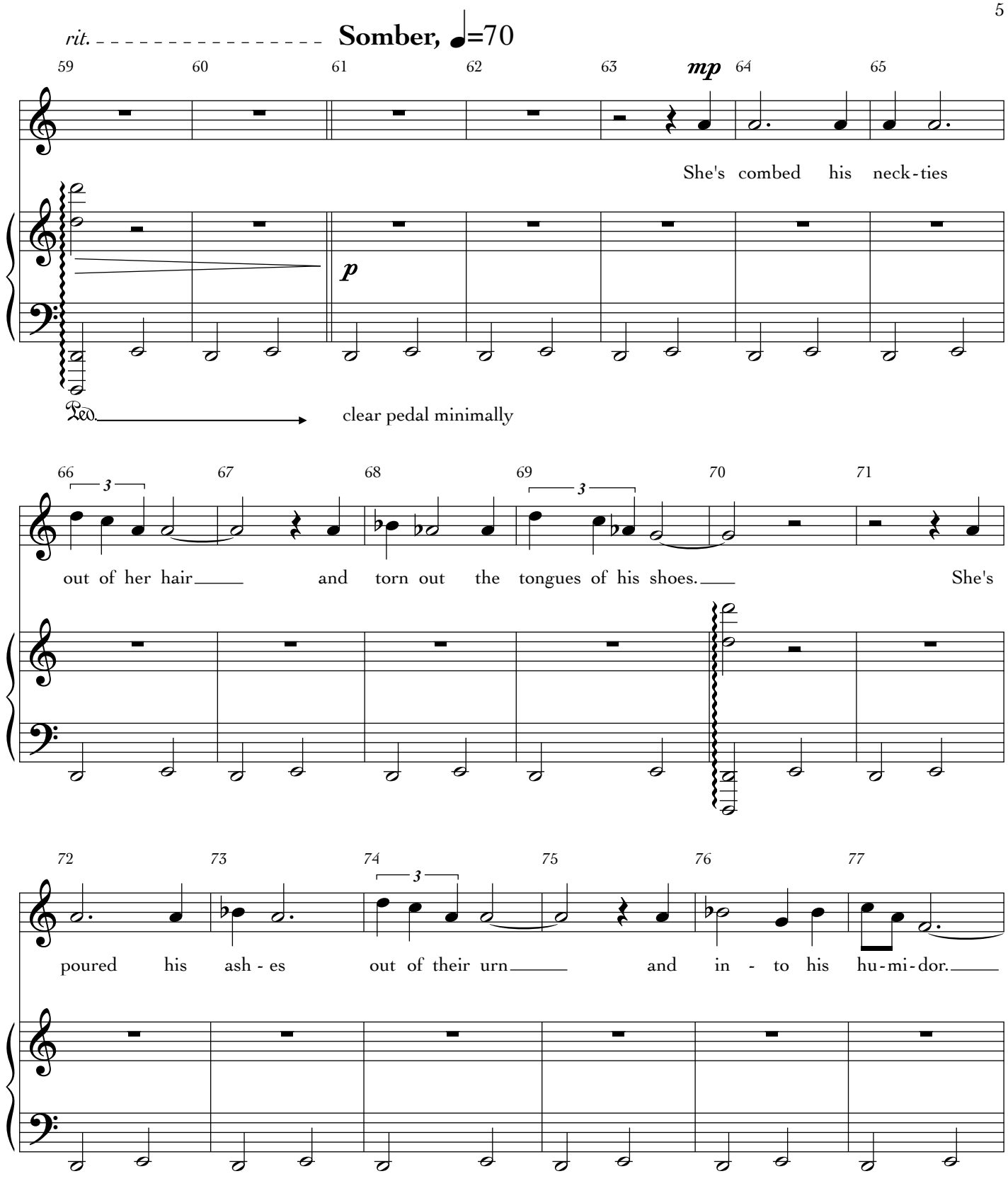
Jay C. Batzner
poetry by Ted Kooser

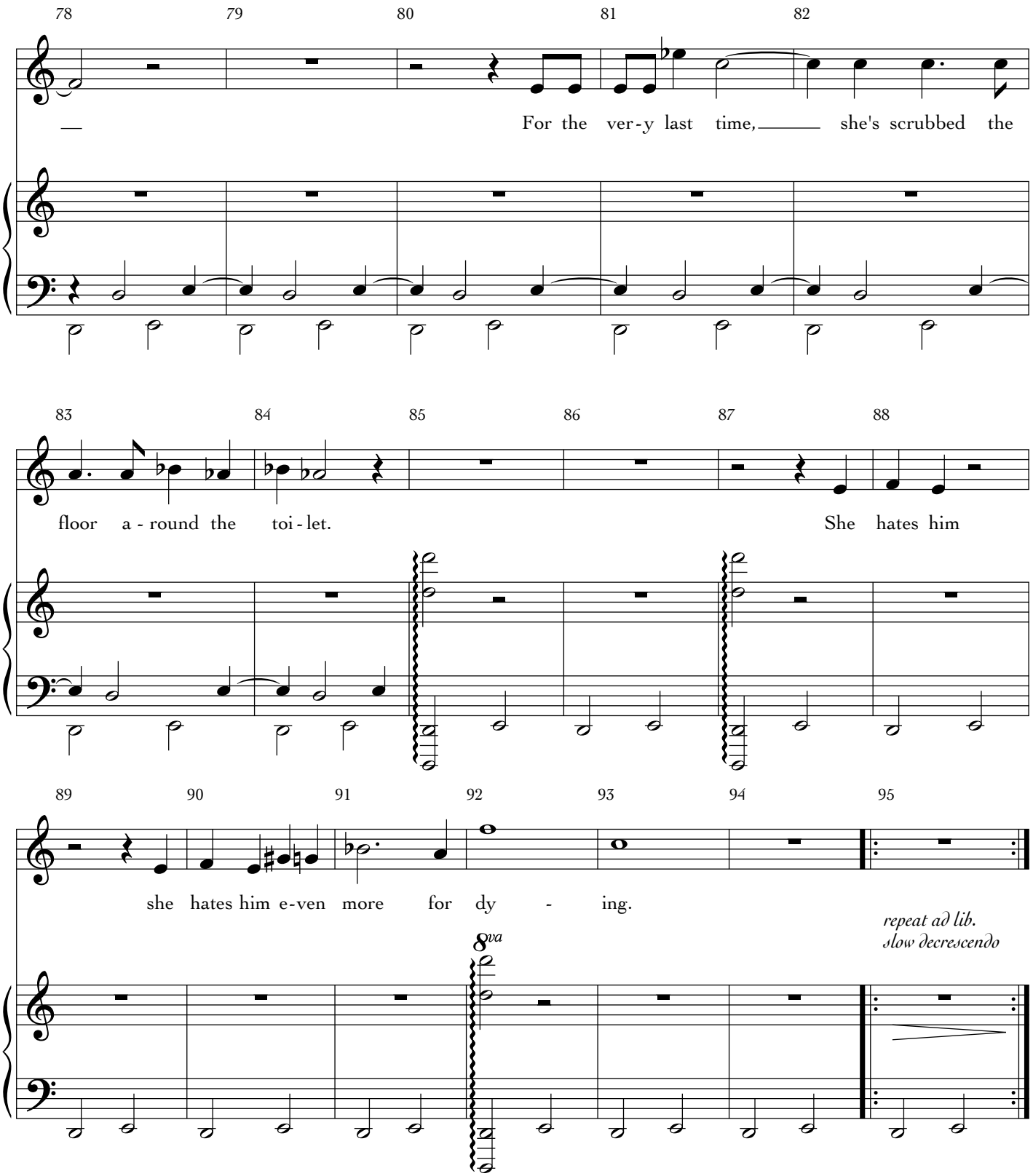



16 17 18 19 20
of an af - ter - noon, her hair still
21 22 23 24 25
damp at the neck from wash-ing it. She should be
26 27 28 29
wear-ing a rain-coat, an old one, dirt-y from not hav-ing mon-ey e-nough for the


30
31
32
33
34
3
clean-ers.
She will take out her glass-es,
35
36
37
38
39
3
and there in the book-store, she will thumb o-ver my
40
41
42
43
44
po-ems, then put the book back up
on its shelf.


45
46
47
48
She will say to her-self, "For that kind of mon-ey,
freely, not in strict tempo
49
50
51
52
53
f
a tempo
I can get my rain - coat cleaned."
f
mp
54
55
56
57
58
And she will.


rit.
Somber, ♩=70
59
60
61
62
63
mp
64
65
She's combed his neck-ties
p
Ped.
clear pedal minimally
66
67
68
69
70
71
3
3
out of her hair and torn out the tongues of his shoes. She's
72
73
74
75
76
77
3
poured his ash-es out of their urn and in-to his hu-mi-dor.


78
79
80
81
82
For the ver-y last time, she's scrubbed the
83
84
85
86
87
88
floor a-round the toi-let. She hates him
89
90
91
92
93
94
95
she hates him e-ven more for dy - ing.
8va
repeat ad lib.
slow decrescendo