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.

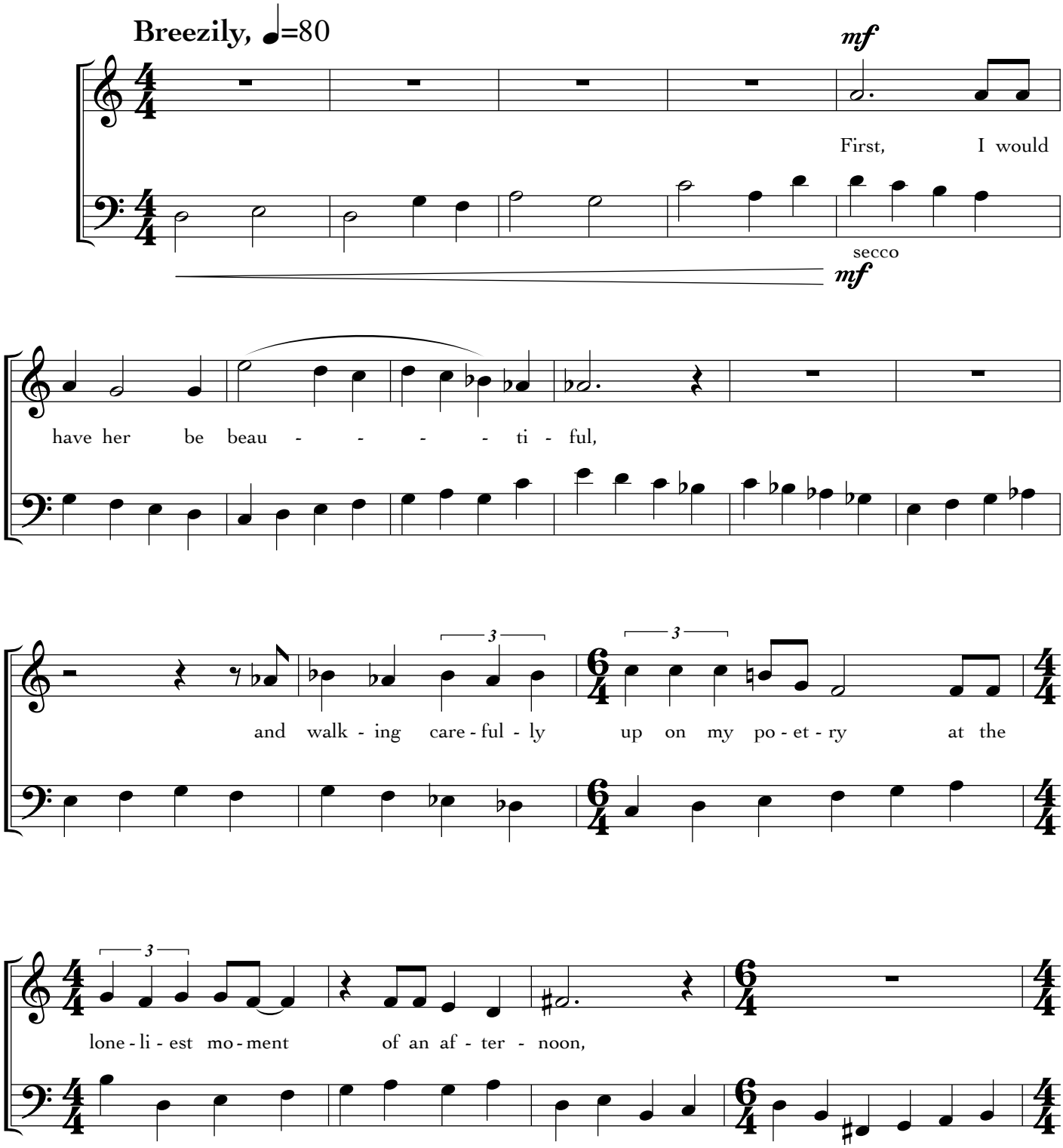
Lyrics from the poem "Selecting a Reader" from *Sure Signs: New and Selected Poems,* by Ted Kooser, © 1980. All rights controlled by the University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, PA 15260. Used by permission of University of Pittsburgh Press.

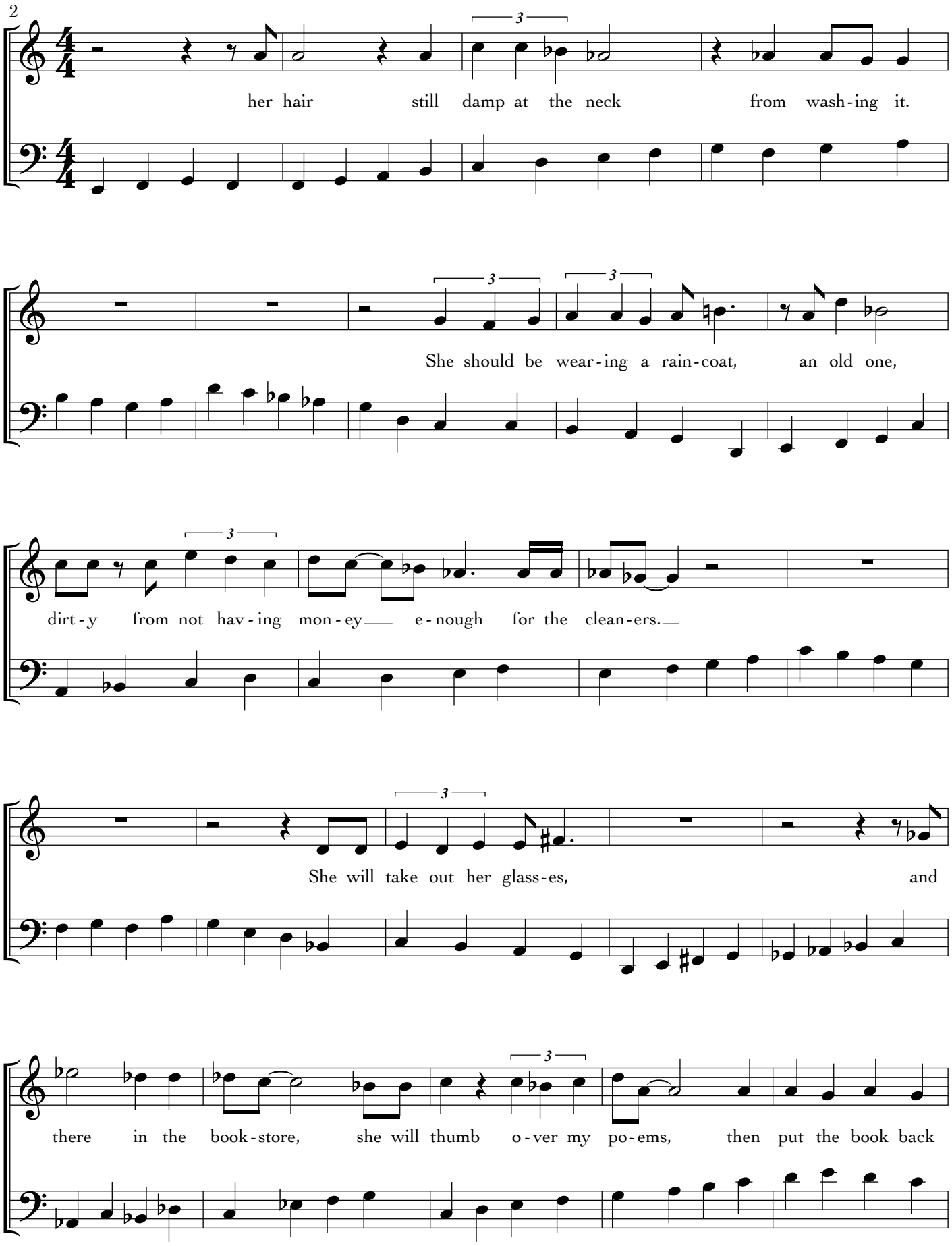
Lyrics from the poem "A Widow" from *Flying and Night: Poems 1965-1985,* by Ted Kooser, © 2005. All rights controlled by the University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, PA 15260. Used by permission of University of Pittsburgh Press.

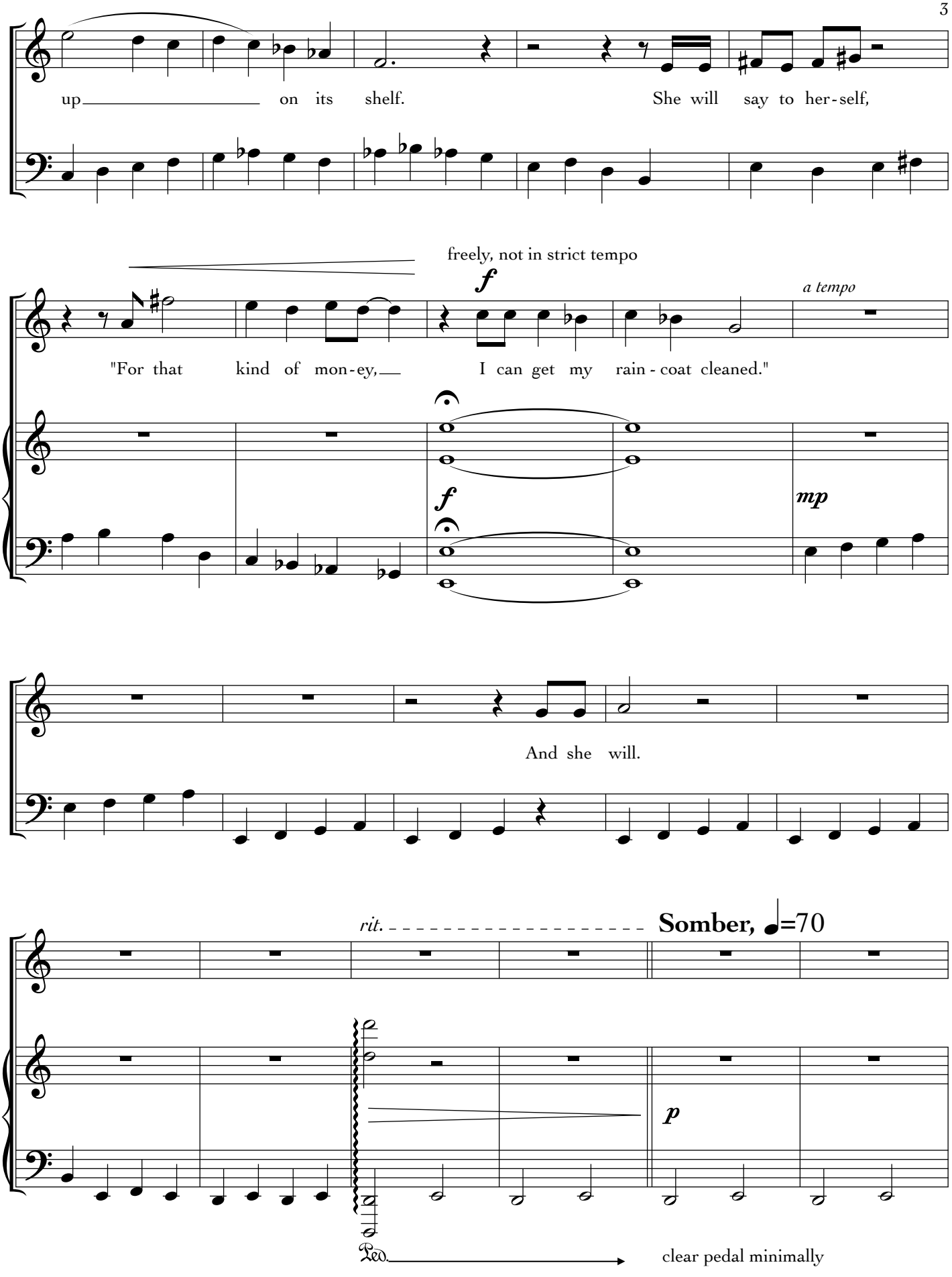
Selecting a Reader/A Widow

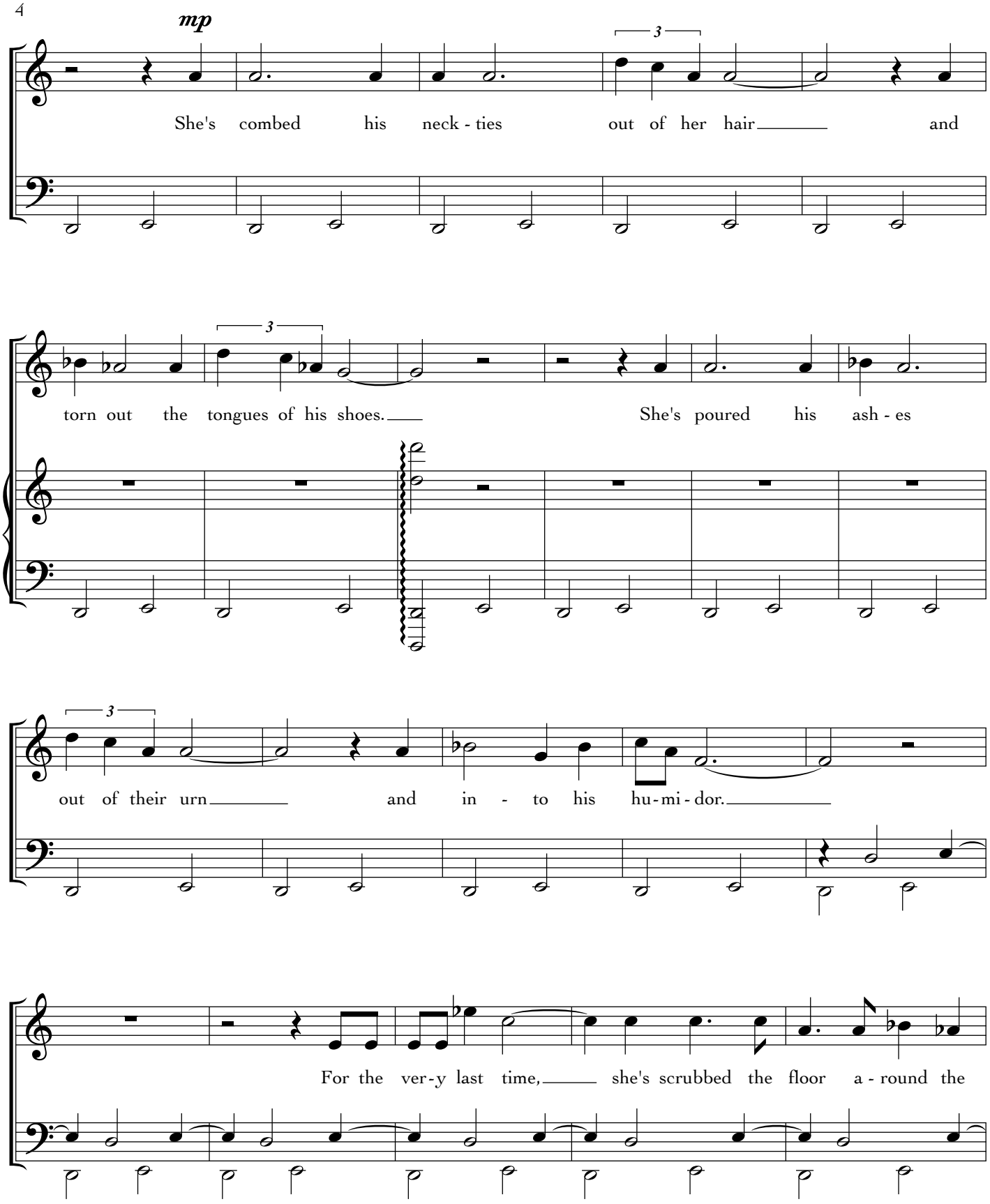
for Katherine Crawford

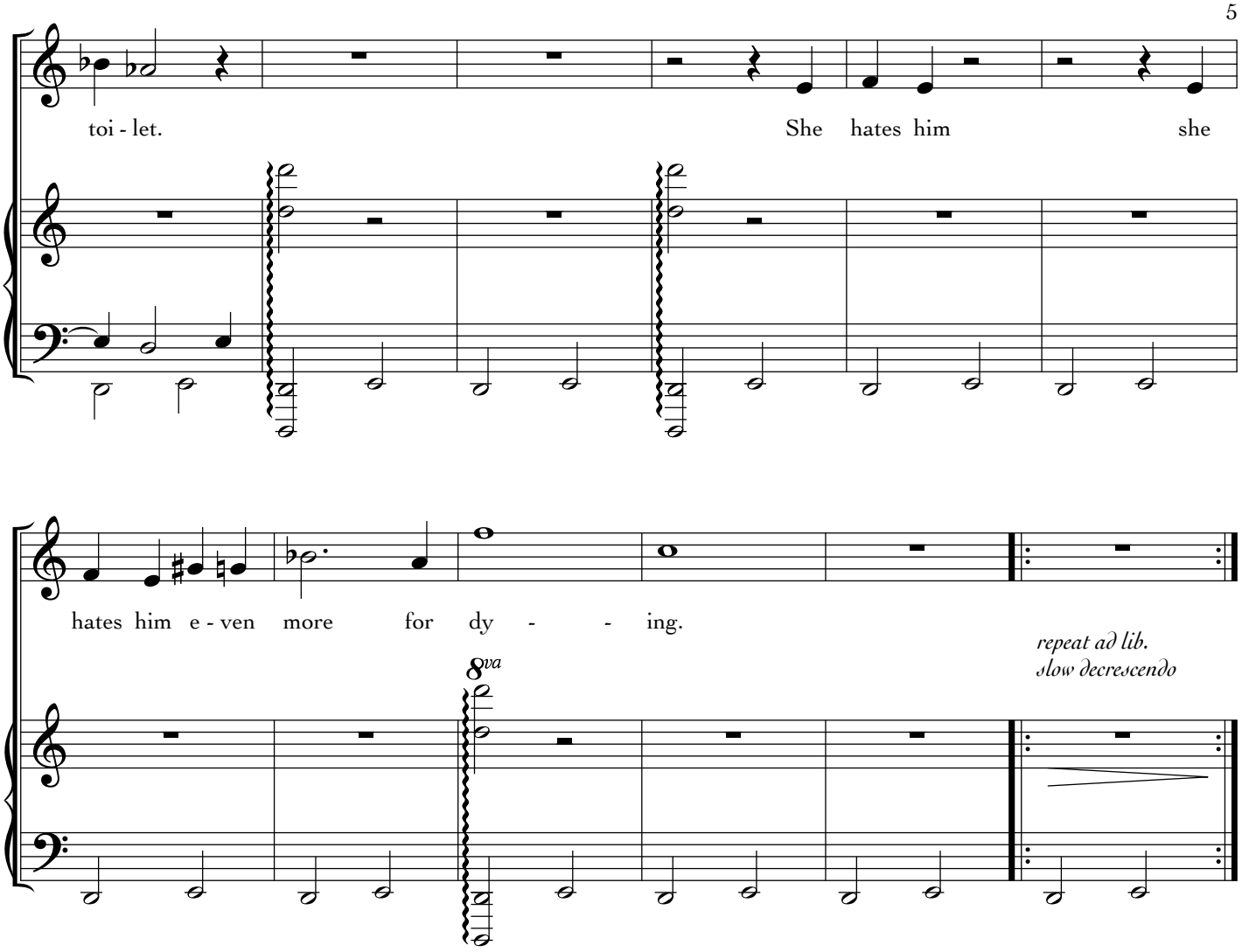
Jay C. Batzner
poetry by Ted Kooser




her hair still damp at the neck from wash-ing it.
She should be wear-ing a rain-coat, an old one,
dirt-y from not hav-ing mon-ey e-nough for the clean-ers.
She will take out her glass-es, and
there in the book-store, she will thumb o-ver my po-ems, then put the book back


up on its shelf.
She will say to her-self,
freely, not in strict tempo
f
a tempo
"For that kind of mon-ey,
I can get my rain-coat cleaned."
f
mp
And she will.
rit.
Somber, ♩=70
p
Ped.
clear pedal minimally


mp
3
She's combed his neck - ties out of her hair and
3
torn out the tongues of his shoes. She's poured his ash - es
3
out of their urn and in - to his hu - mi - dor.
For the ver - y last time, she's scrubbed the floor a - round the


toi - let.
She hates him she
hates him e - ven more for dy - - ing.
8va
repeat ad lib.
slow decrescendo