Gwyneth Walker

IF EVER TWO WERE ONE

for Mixed Chorus

based on the poetry of Anne Bradstreet
(1612-1672)

Commissioned by Stace Stegman
as a gift to his wife, Sandra Frey Stegman

Duration: 3' 15"

Program Notes

The lyrics for this song are taken from two poems of Anne Bradstreet (1612-1672): "To My Dear and Loving Husband" and "A Letter to Her Husband, Absent Upon Public Employment." The first poem is a simple testament of loving devotion, while the second (a fragment of which is interspersed into the song text) portrays the pain of separation/distance, and the joy of reunion.

The musical setting unfolds in three sections. The first poem is presented in phrases which open as the lines diverge. A listener might imagine a flower opening. Or, the reading of the poem with a sigh of ecstasy after each line. The intensity and range of the phrases increases until the words: "Then while we live, in love let us so persevere, that when we live no more, we may live ever."

The middle section laments the absence of the husband. As the Sopranos and Altos sing the new words, the Tenors and Basses quietly repeat a pattern of: "we may live ever" as a background. Finally, the voices join together to sing the passionate lines: "Flesh of thy flesh, bone of thy bone, I here, thou there, yet both are one." And then the opening section returns, more powerfully than before, concluding with a triumphant: "When we live no more, we may live ever!"

About the Composer

Dr. Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947) is a graduate of Brown University and the Hartt School of Music. She holds B.A., M.M. and D.M.A. Degrees in Music Composition. A former faculty member of the Oberlin College Conservatory, Walker resigned from academic employment in 1982 in order to pursue a career as a full-time composer. She now lives on a dairy farm in Braintree, Vermont.

Walker's catalog includes over 130 commissioned works for orchestra, band, chorus and chamber ensembles. The music of Gwyneth Walker is published by E.C. Schirmer of Boston (choral & vocal music) and MMB Music of St. Louis (orchestral & instrumental music).

Gwyneth Walker is a proud resident of Vermont. She is the recipient of the Year 2000 "Lifetime Achievement Award" from the Vermont Arts Council.

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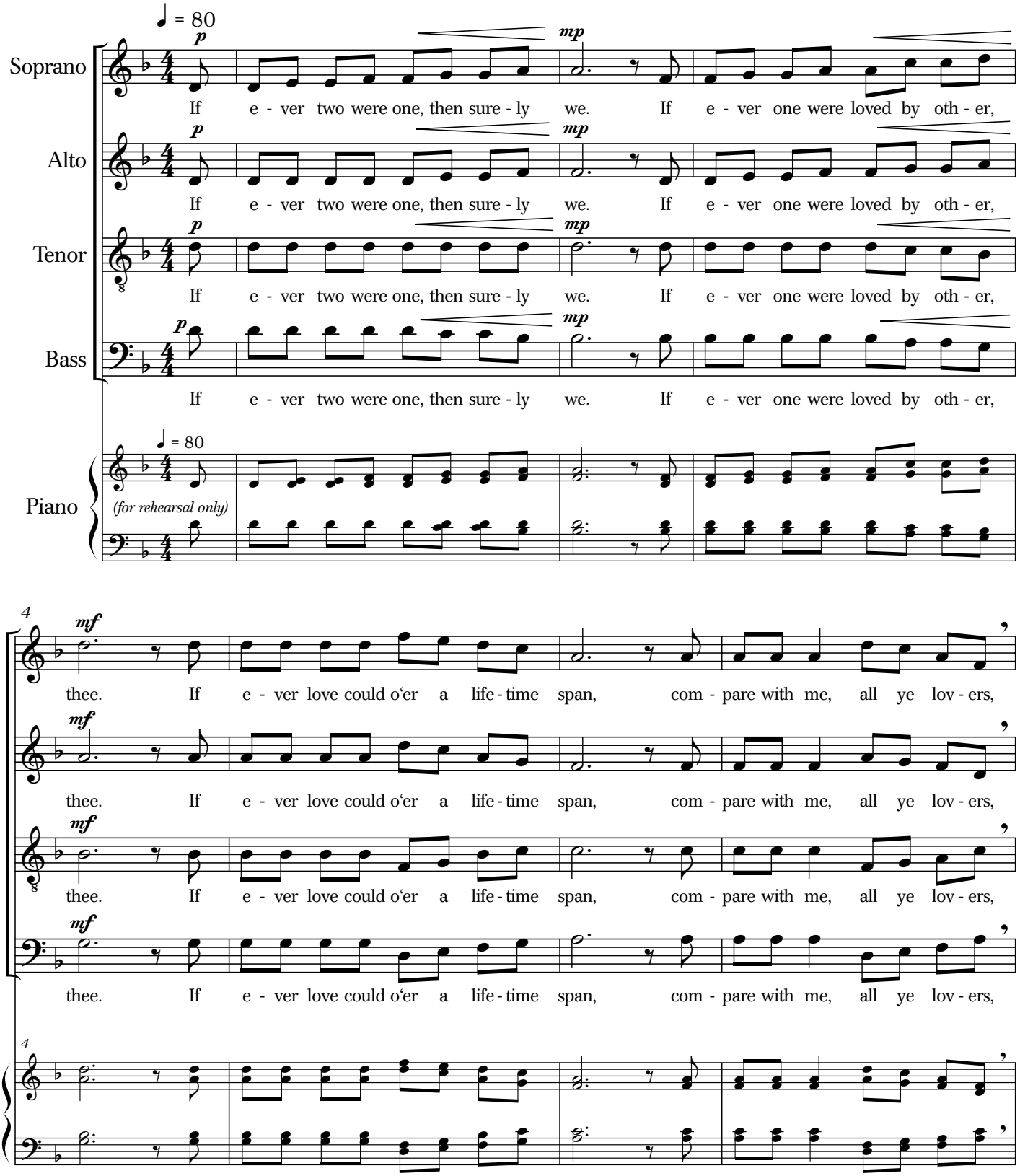
If Ever Two Were One

SATB

Text: Anne Bradstreet (1612–1672)
adapted by the composer

Gwyneth Walker



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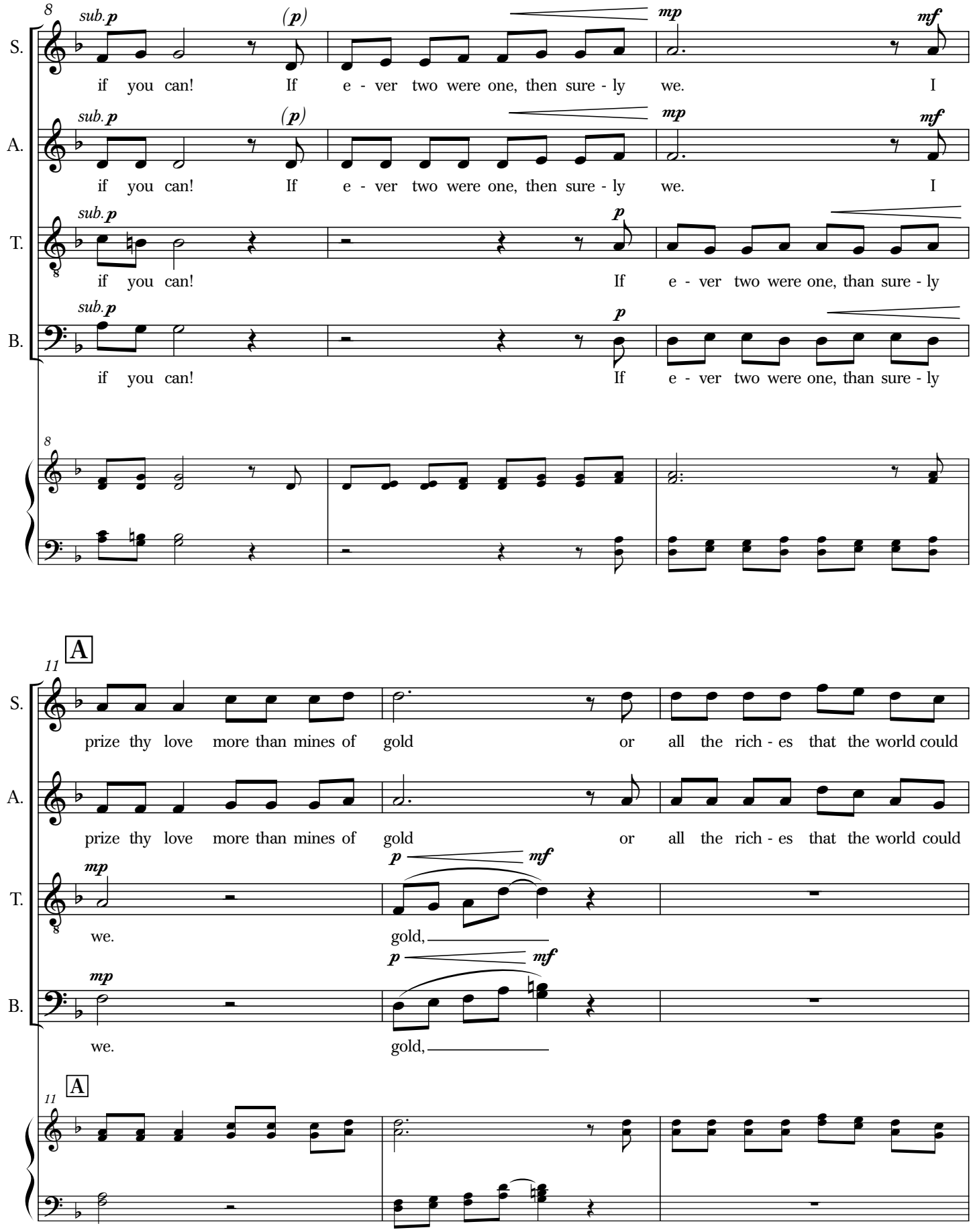
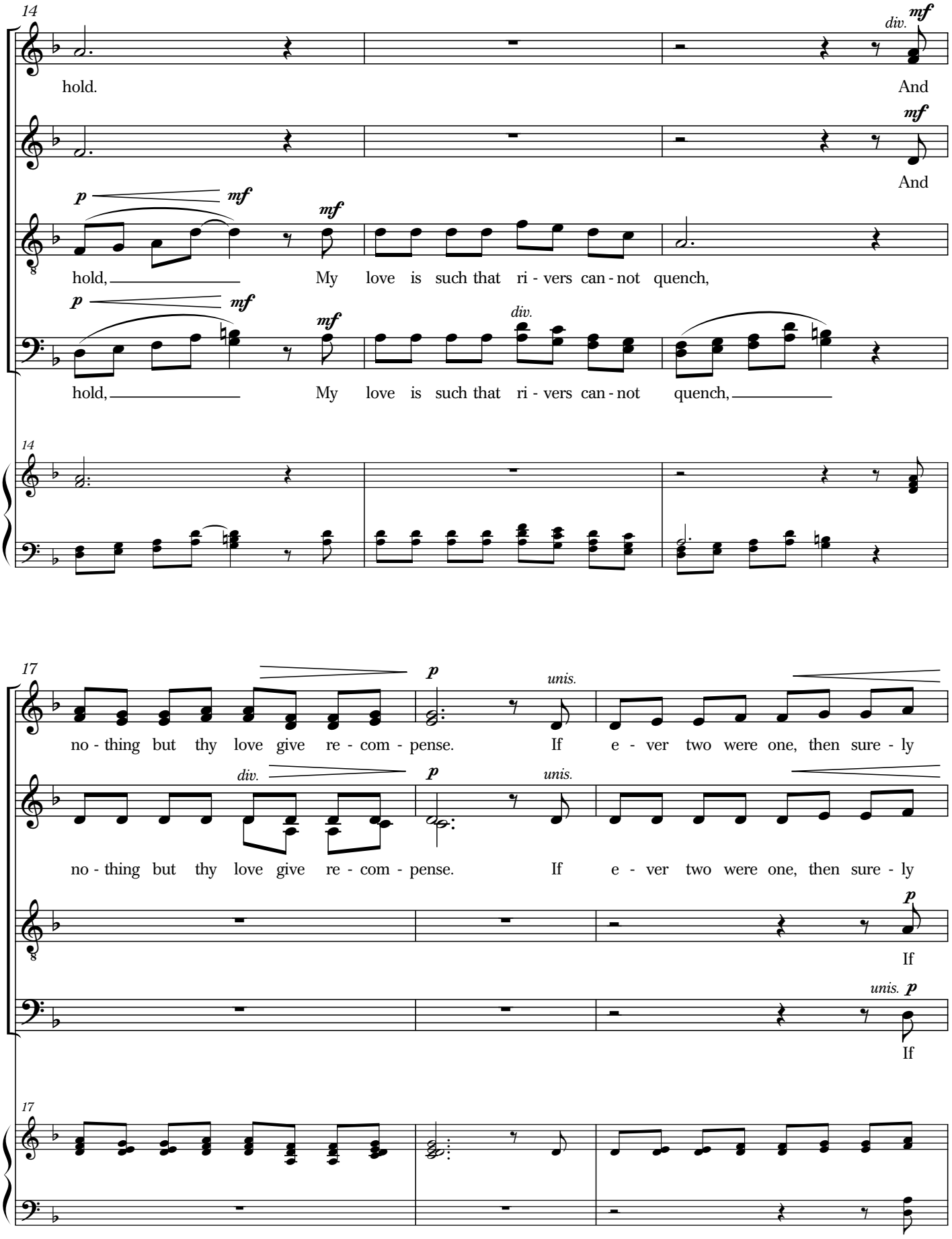
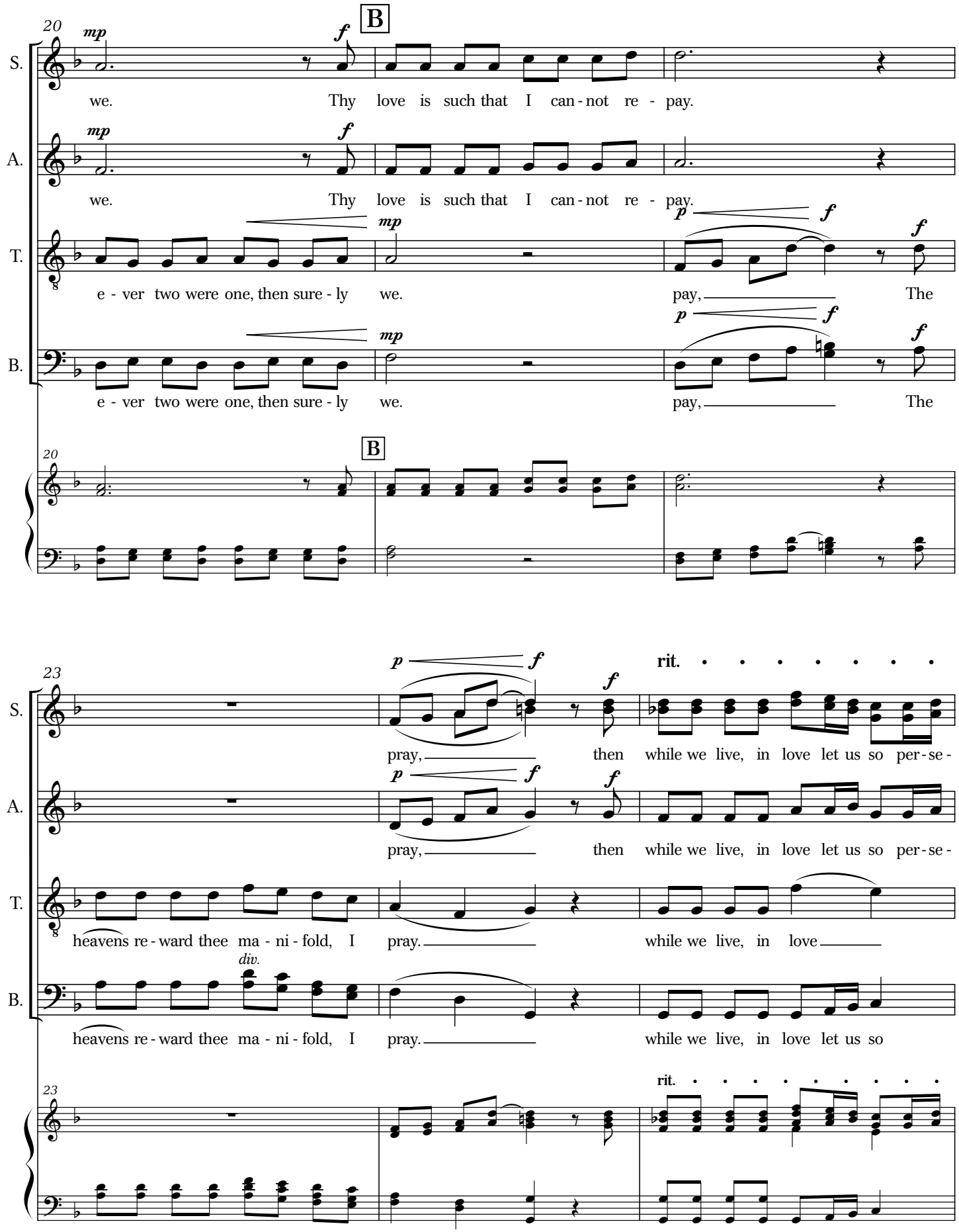
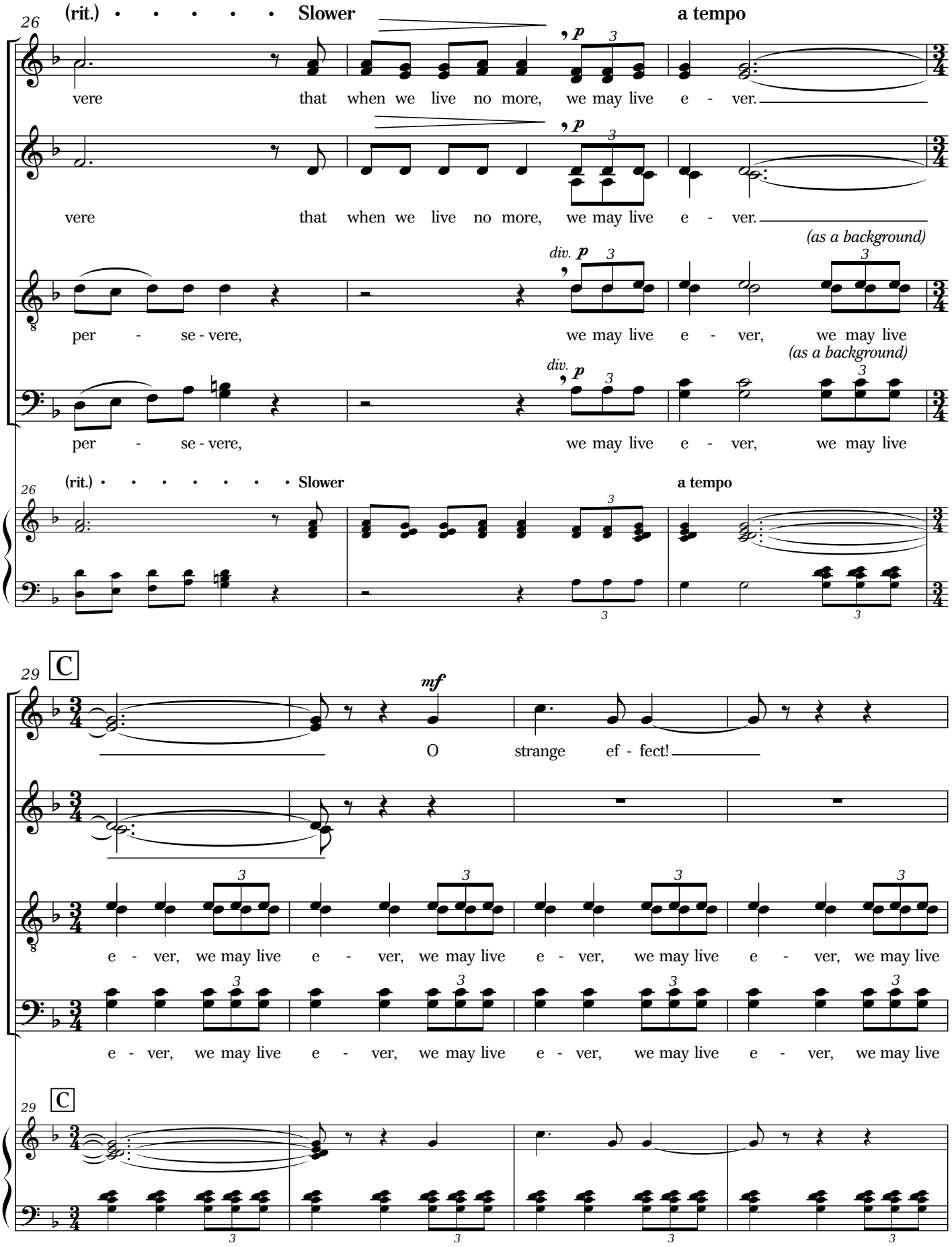
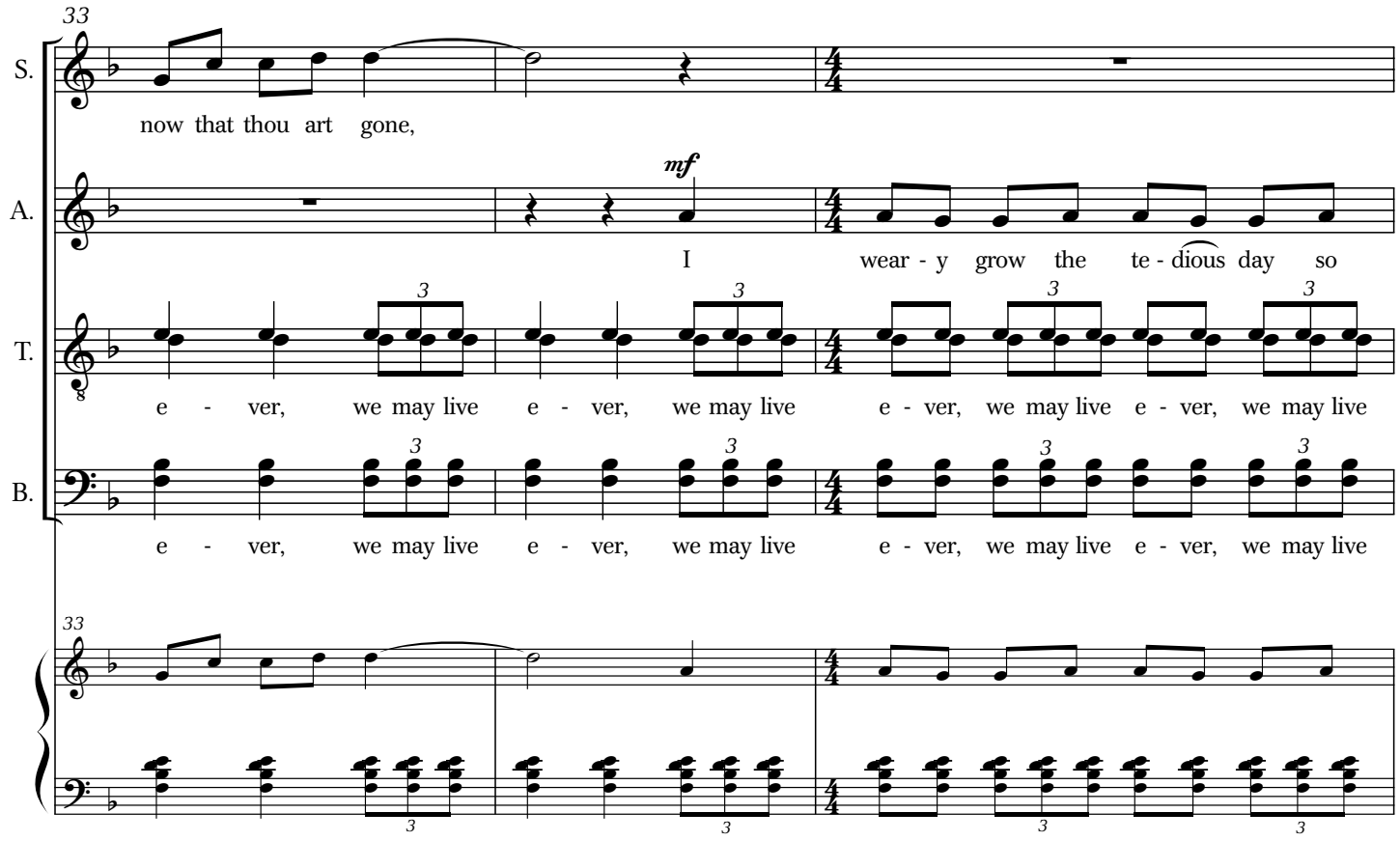
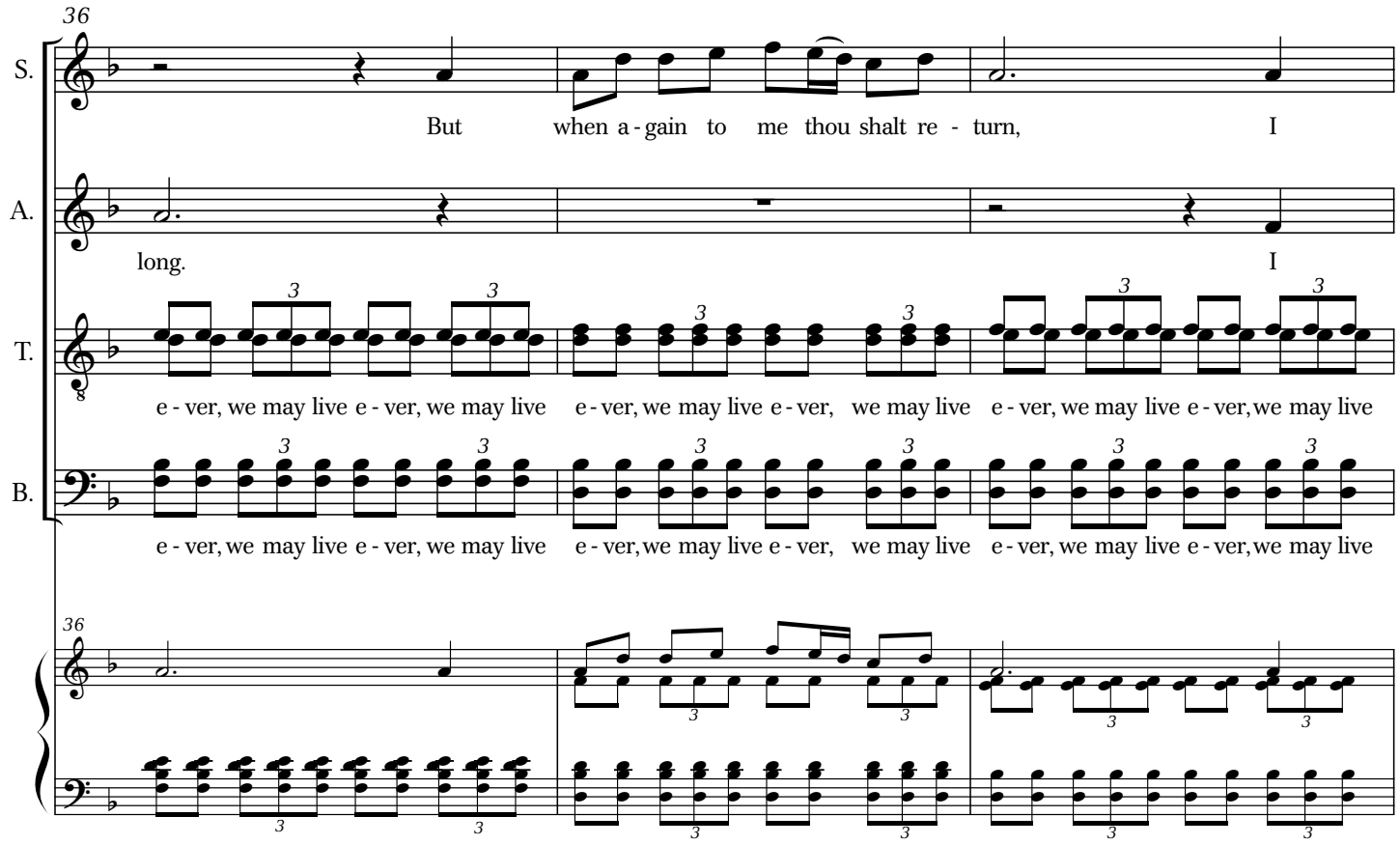

8
sub. p
(p)
mp
mf
S.
if you can! If e - ver two were one, then sure - ly we. I
A.
if you can! If e - ver two were one, then sure - ly we. I
T.
if you can! If e - ver two were one, than sure - ly
B.
if you can! If e - ver two were one, than sure - ly
11
A
prize thy love more than mines of gold or all the rich - es that the world could
we. gold,

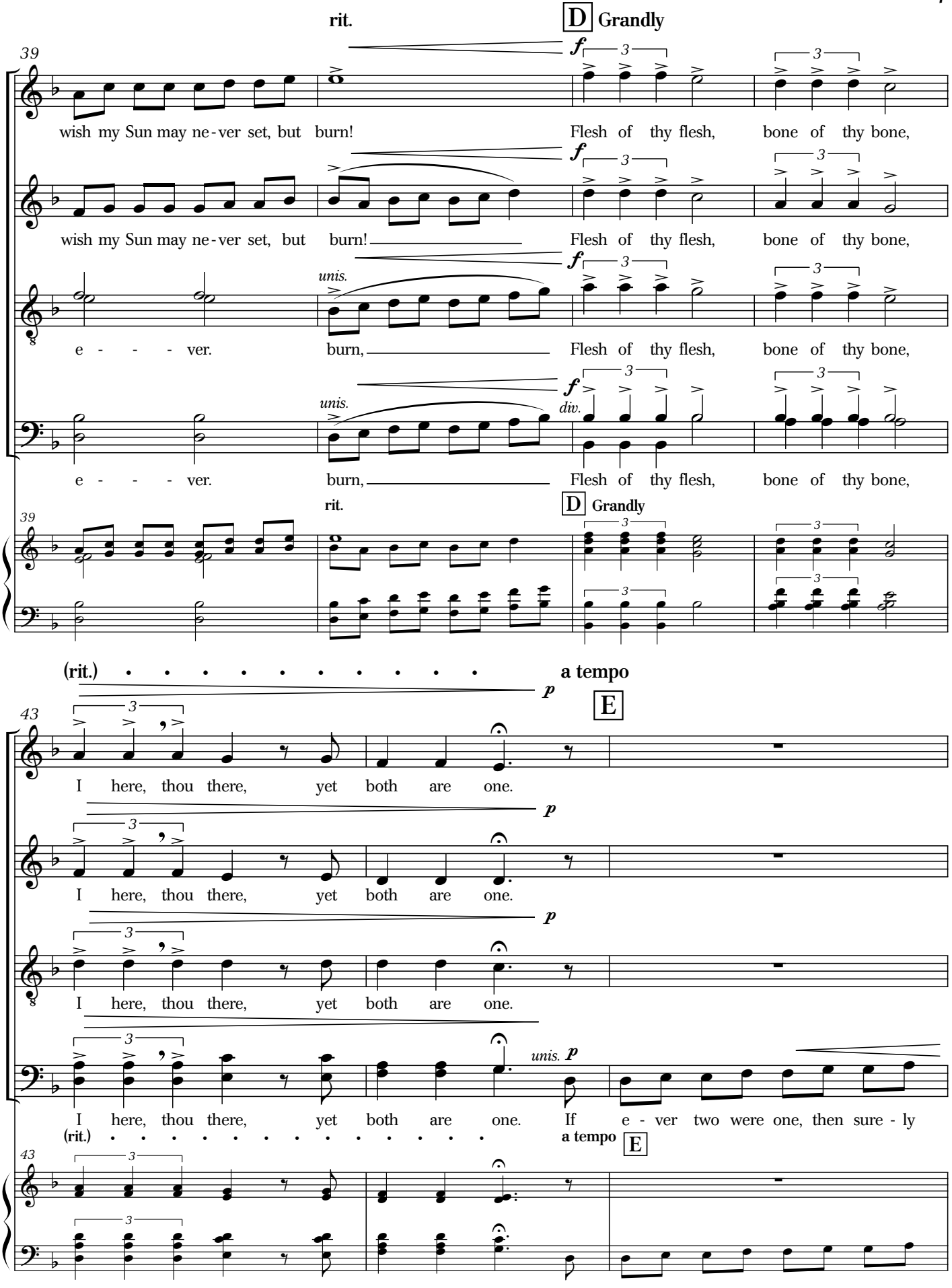

14
S.
A.
T.
B.
hold.
And
And
hold, My love is such that ri - vers can - not quench,
hold, My love is such that ri - vers can - not quench,
17
no - thing but thy love give re - com - pense. If e - ver two were one, then sure - ly
no - thing but thy love give re - com - pense. If e - ver two were one, then sure - ly
If
If

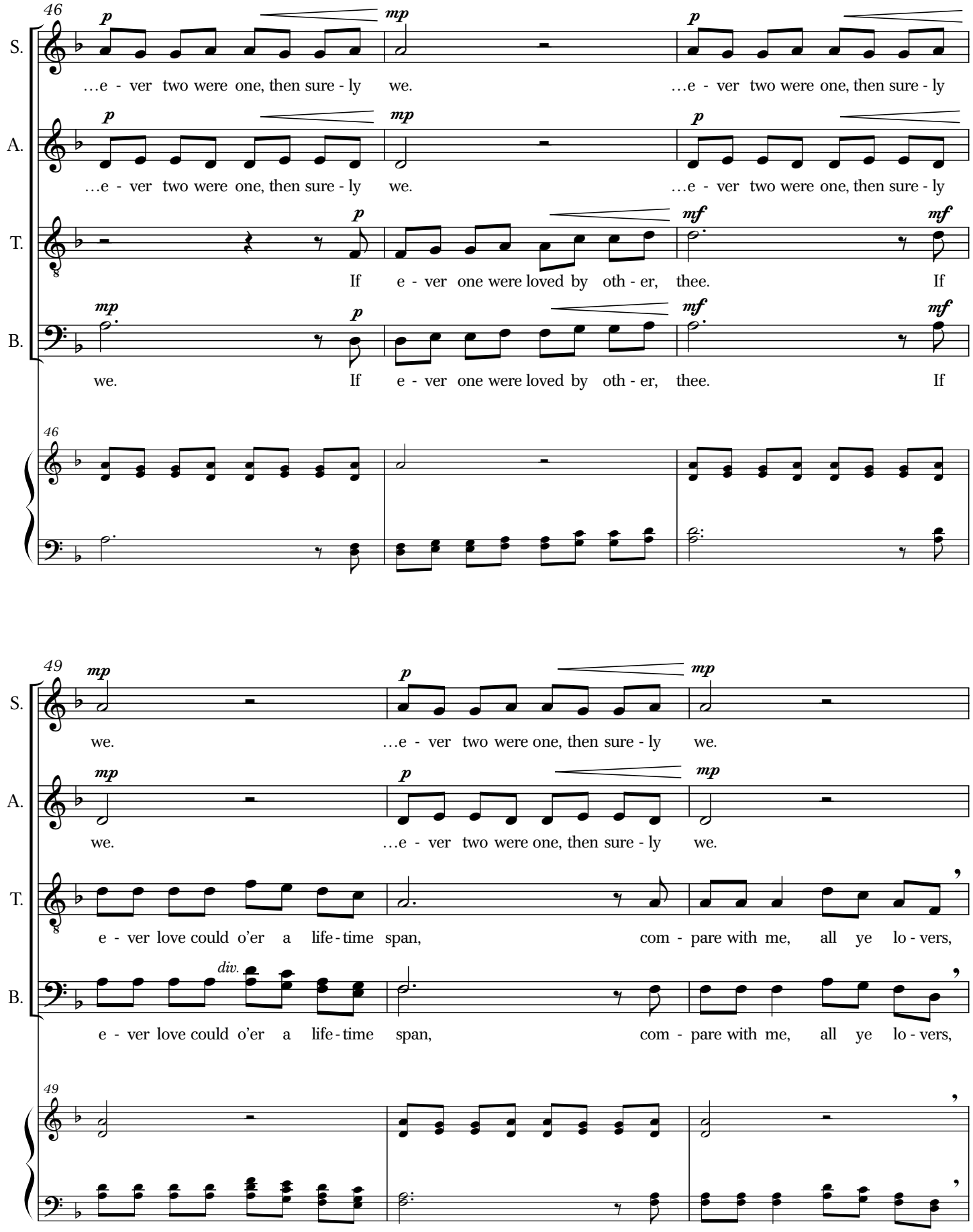

20
B
S.
A.
T.
B.
mp
f
we. Thy love is such that I can - not re - pay.
e - ver two were one, then sure - ly we.
p
pay, The
23
rit.
pray, then while we live, in love let us so per - se -
heavens re - ward thee ma - ni - fold, I pray.
while we live, in love
div.

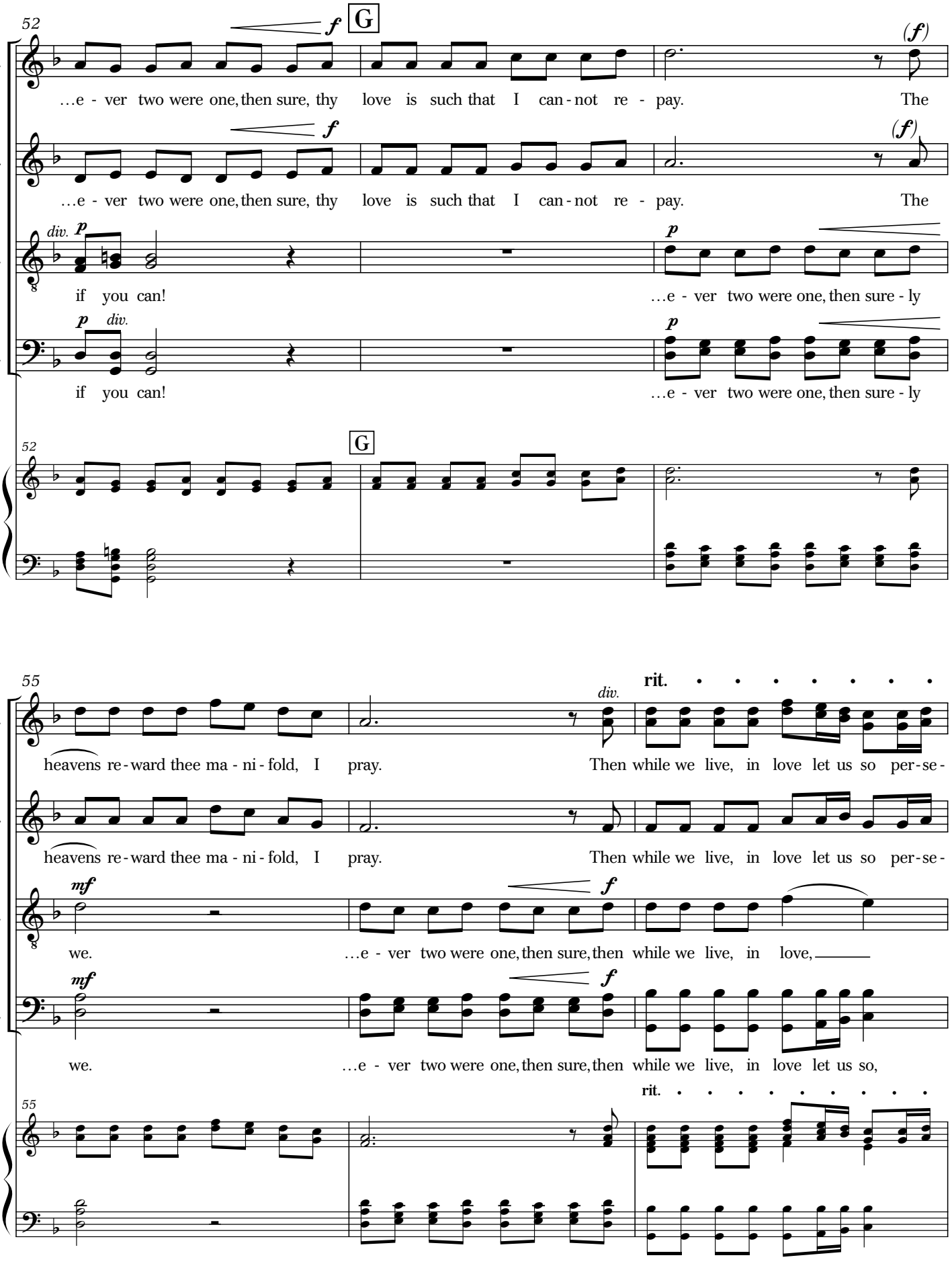

26
(rit.) Slower
a tempo
S.
vere that when we live no more, we may live e - ver.
A.
vere that when we live no more, we may live e - ver.
(as a background)
T.
per - se - vere, we may live e - ver, we may live
(as a background)
B.
per - se - vere, we may live e - ver, we may live
29
C
mf
O strange ef - fect!
e - ver, we may live e - ver, we may live e - ver, we may live e - ver, we may live
e - ver, we may live e - ver, we may live e - ver, we may live e - ver, we may live

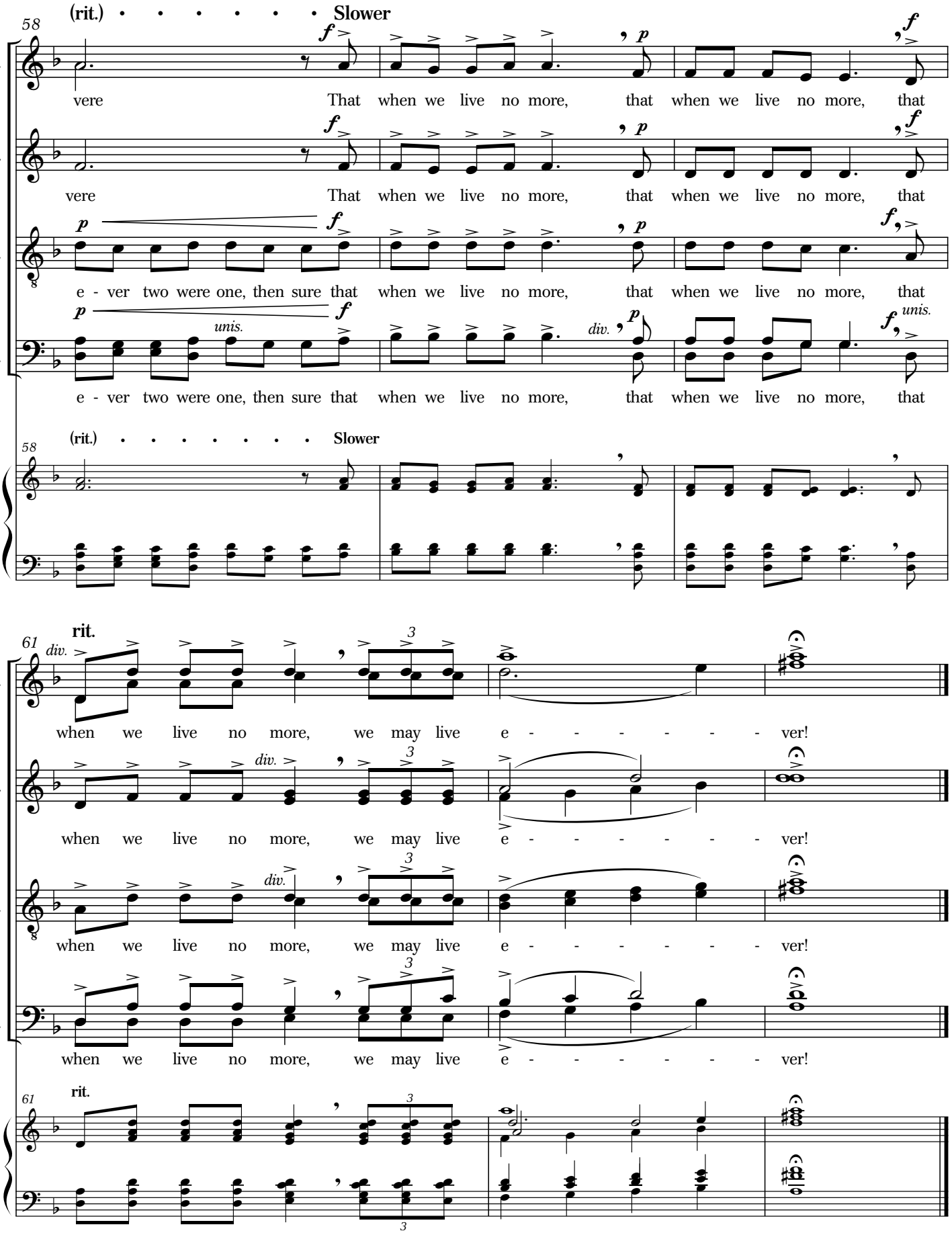

33
S.
now that thou art gone,
mf
A.
I wear - y grow the te - dious day so
T.
e - ver, we may live e - ver, we may live e - ver, we may live e - ver, we may live
B.
e - ver, we may live e - ver, we may live e - ver, we may live e - ver, we may live
33


36
S.
But when a - gain to me thou shalt re - turn, I
A.
long.
I
T.
e - ver, we may live e - ver, we may live e - ver, we may live e - ver, we may live e - ver, we may live e - ver, we may live
B.
e - ver, we may live e - ver, we may live e - ver, we may live e - ver, we may live e - ver, we may live e - ver, we may live
36


rit.
D Grandly
39
S.
wish my Sun may ne - ver set, but burn! Flesh of thy flesh, bone of thy bone,
A.
wish my Sun may ne - ver set, but burn! Flesh of thy flesh, bone of thy bone,
T.
unis.
e - - - - ver. burn, Flesh of thy flesh, bone of thy bone,
B.
unis.
div.
e - - - - ver. burn, Flesh of thy flesh, bone of thy bone,
(rit.)
a tempo
E
43
I here, thou there, yet both are one.
unis.
If e - ver two were one, then sure - ly


46
S.
A.
T.
B.
p
mp
mf
…e - ver two were one, then sure - ly we.
If e - ver one were loved by oth - er, thee.
49
we.
e - ver love could o'er a life - time span, com - pare with me, all ye lo - vers,
div.


52
G
S.
A.
T.
B.
…e - ver two were one, then sure, thy love is such that I can - not re - pay. The
if you can!
…e - ver two were one, then sure - ly
55
rit.
heavens re - ward thee ma - ni - fold, I pray. Then while we live, in love let us so per - se -
we.
…e - ver two were one, then sure, then while we live, in love,
we.
…e - ver two were one, then sure, then while we live, in love let us so,



Duration: 3'15" April 16, 2003 Braintree, Vermont