Deconstruct a Chrysalis

(SATB version)

Text: Leanne Veitch

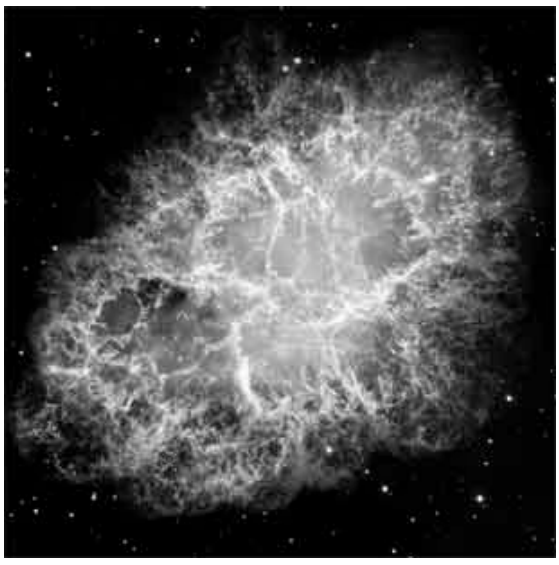
Music: Michael Winikoff

deconstruct a chrysalis
unravel the twisted thread
pull apart the gossamer

take a look
nothing inside
but a shrivelled corpse

no pulse, no beating heart
no wings, perhaps the tiniest hint
of a shroud that once might have flown

now the gift is gone



deconstruct the universe
unravel the twisted mind
pull apart the skin, the eyes

take a look
nothing inside
but a shrivelled heart
now pulled apart

Program Notes

This piece is dedicated to Leanne,
without whom it wouldn't exist.

American poet John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892) wrote in his poem Maud Muller:
"*For of all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these: 'It might have been!*",
and these sentiments are echoed here.

The first thing that struck me when reading Leanne's poem, apart from its vivid imagery, was the almost unspeakable sadness evoked by the poem, and especially the regret, the "what-if" of a butterfly that "*might have flown*".

The poem is about the futility of using reductionism in an attempt to understand life, and the universe. It also highlights the violent nature of taking things apart to see how they work: pulling apart the gossamer, pulling apart the skin, the eyes.

In setting the poem I have tried to capture the violence ("*pull apart*"), the horror ("*take a look*"), and the unspeakable sadness ("*of a shroud that* [once[1]] *might have flown*"). The climax of the work is the second repetition of "*nothing inside*" (third last line, bars 83-88).

Performance Notes

Consonants in brackets should not be pronounced – they are there to indicate what the word is. The chant in the first bar could be a solo (conductor's discretion). Also, all tempo markings are suggestions and should be modified by the conductor to suit the choir and venue.

In long sustained notes the choir should stagger breathing as needed.

In bars 33-47 the tenors and basses should sound like drumming, and for the sopranos (in bars 35-41) each 4 beat phrase should be phrased (think of a soaring bird!). The altos in bars 38-42 should come through.

The climax of the work is bars 84-87, and the diminuendo should not start too early.

In the final section if the second basses cannot sing the low E-flat then they should sing the first bass B-flat, and the first basses should sing the E-flat above it (i.e. the second bass part is sung an octave higher, by the first basses, and the second basses sing the first bass part as written).

The various short solos should be sung by choir members. Some of the solos can be done by a soprano or alto. However, the solo from bar 82 needs to be a first soprano (high A-flat).

Small notes (e.g. altos from bar 96) indicate an optional divisi.

Note: The piano reduction is designed to be a playable part that will provide support in rehearsals, rather than being a complete reduction.

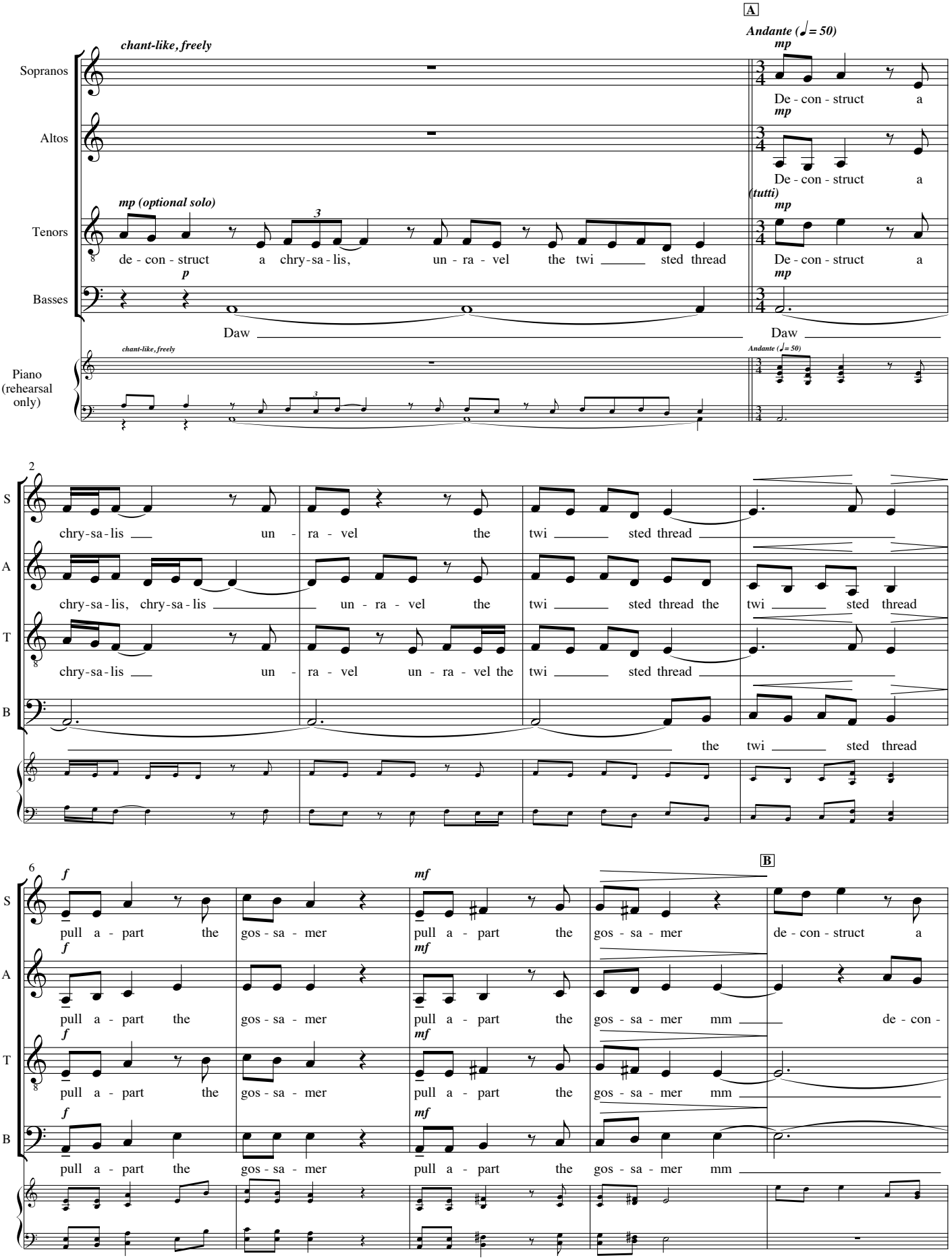
[1] The word "once" has been omitted from the setting with the poet's permission.

Deconstruct a Chrysalis

Leanne Daharja Veitch

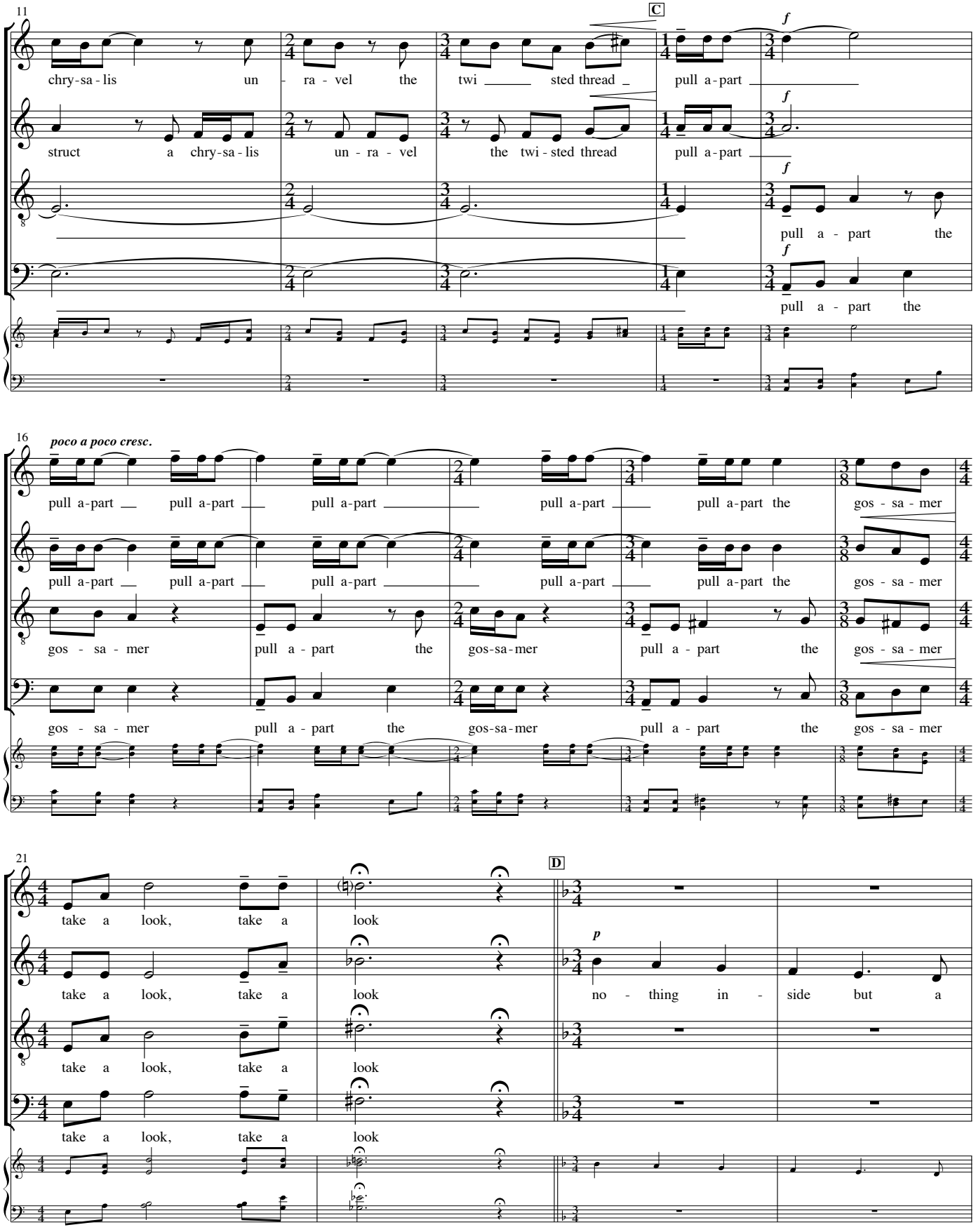
Duration: approx. 6:30

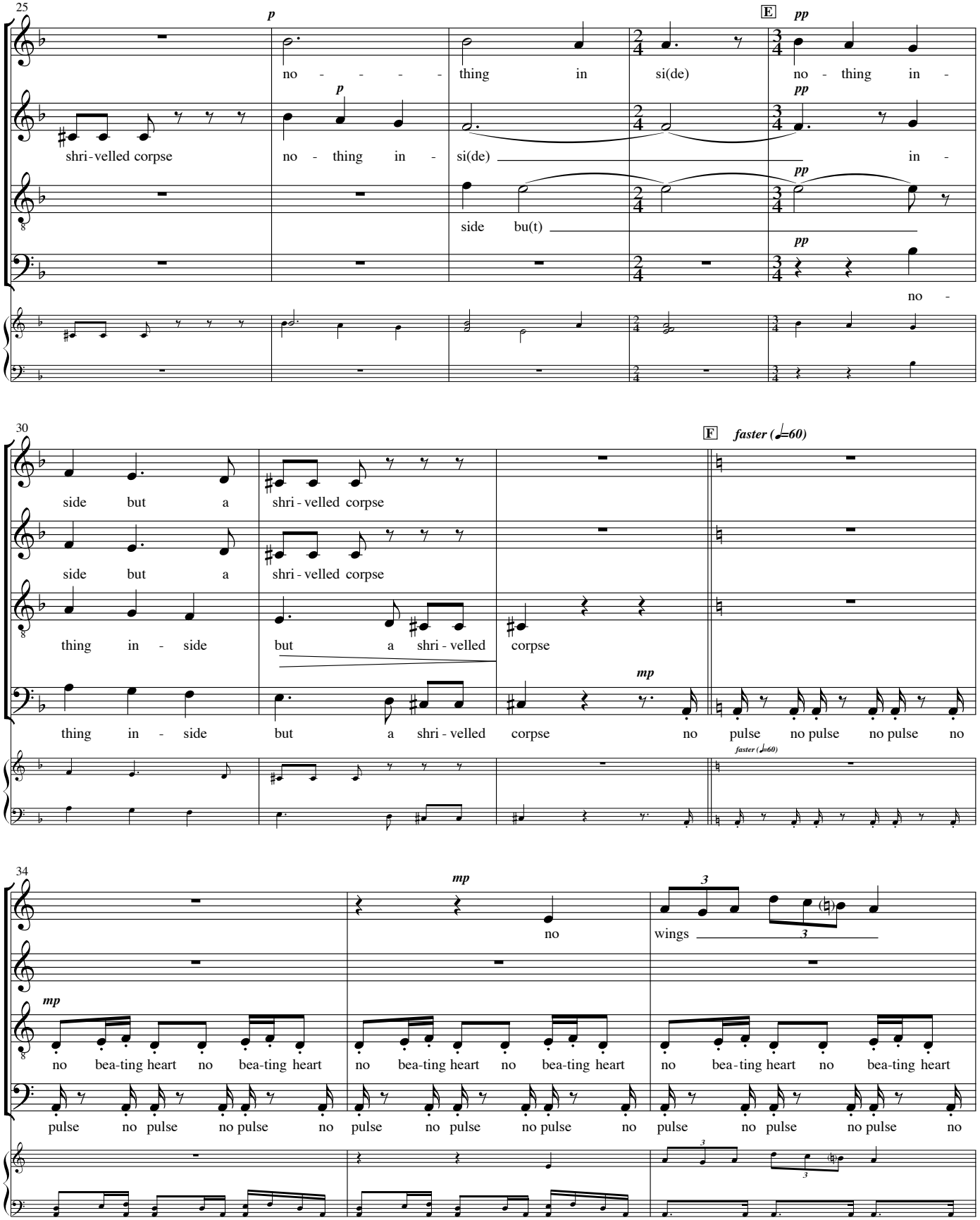
Michael Winikoff

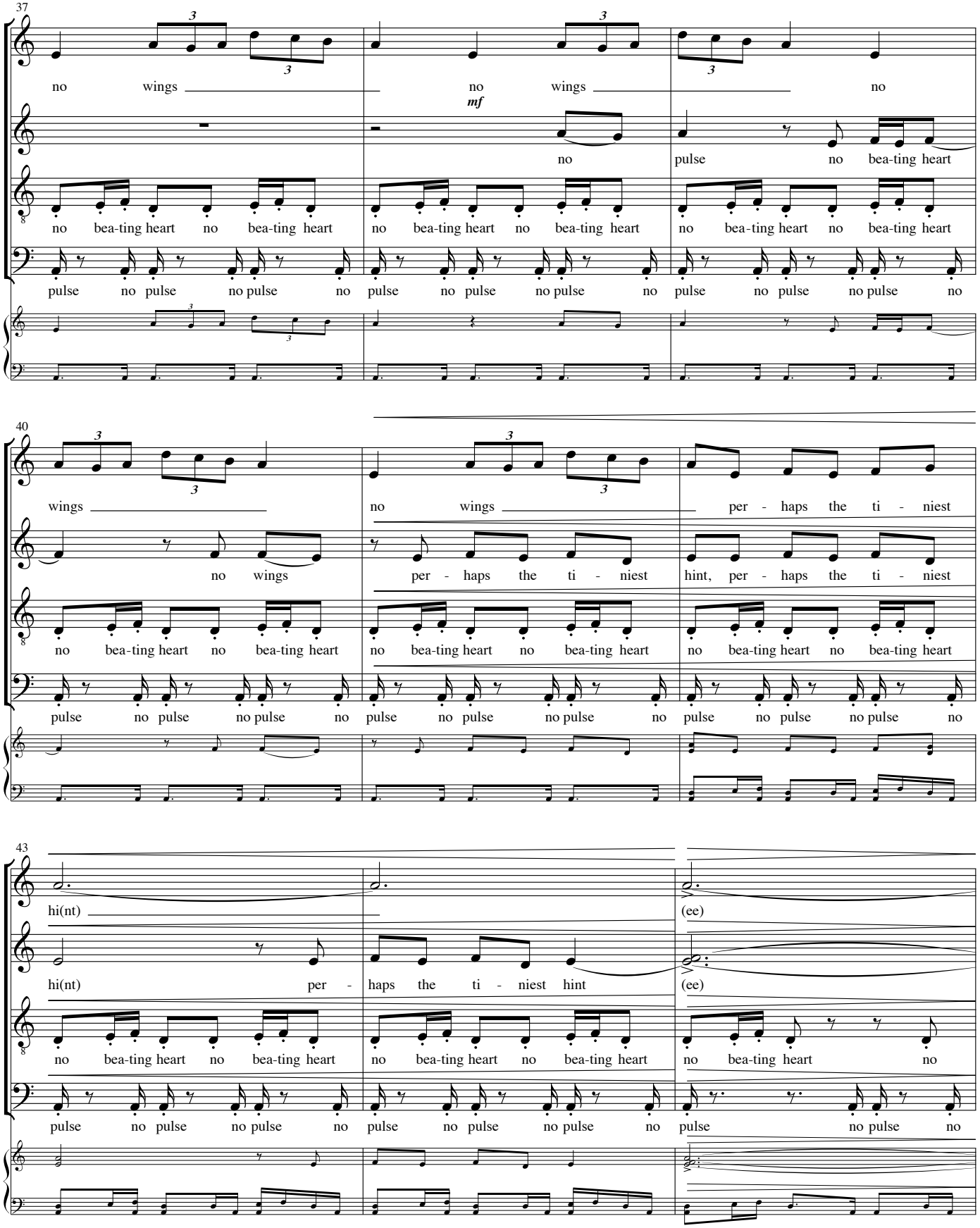


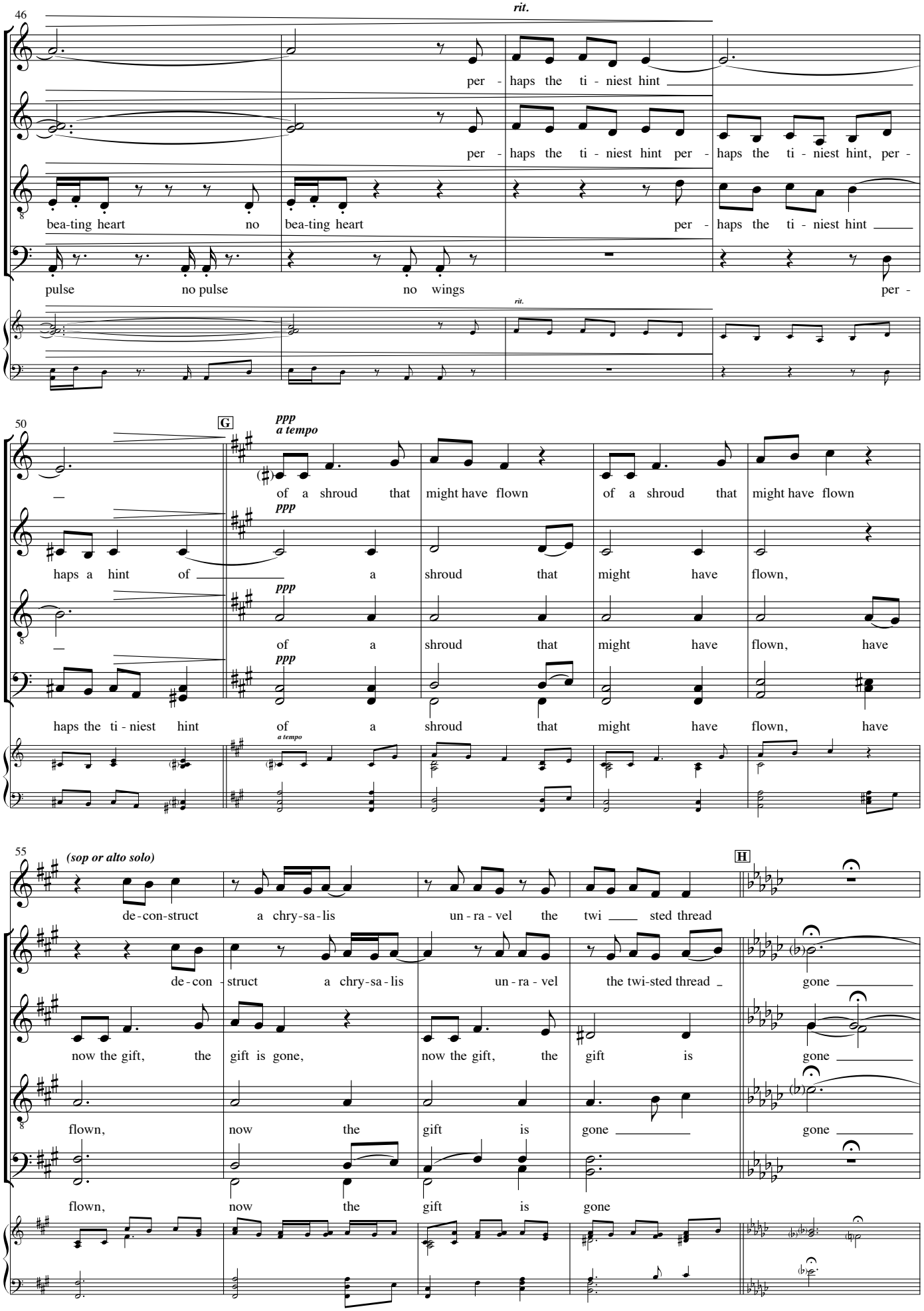
© Copyright 2008 Leanne Daharja Veitch (text) and Michael Winikoff (music). All rights reserved.

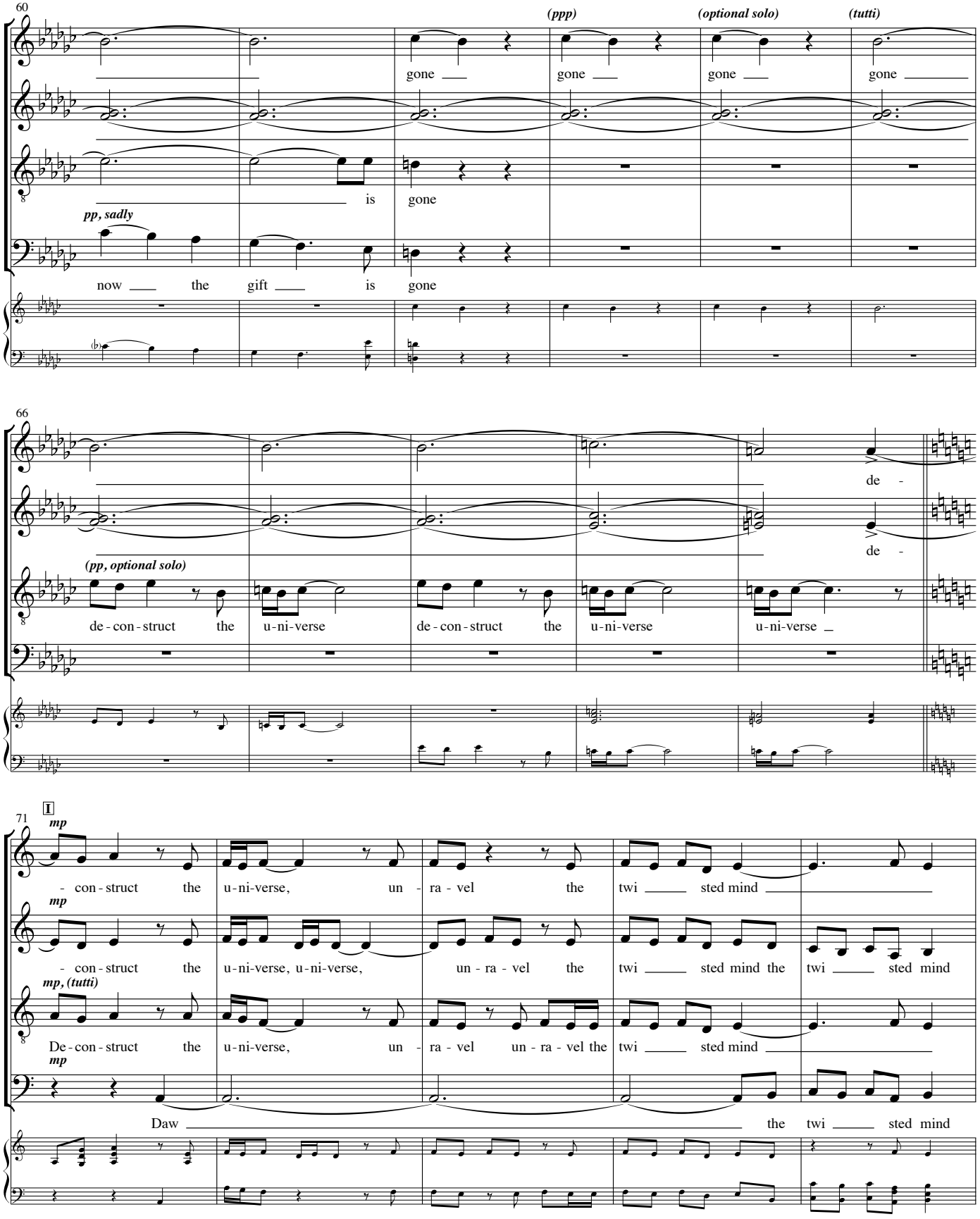
winikoff@gmail.com

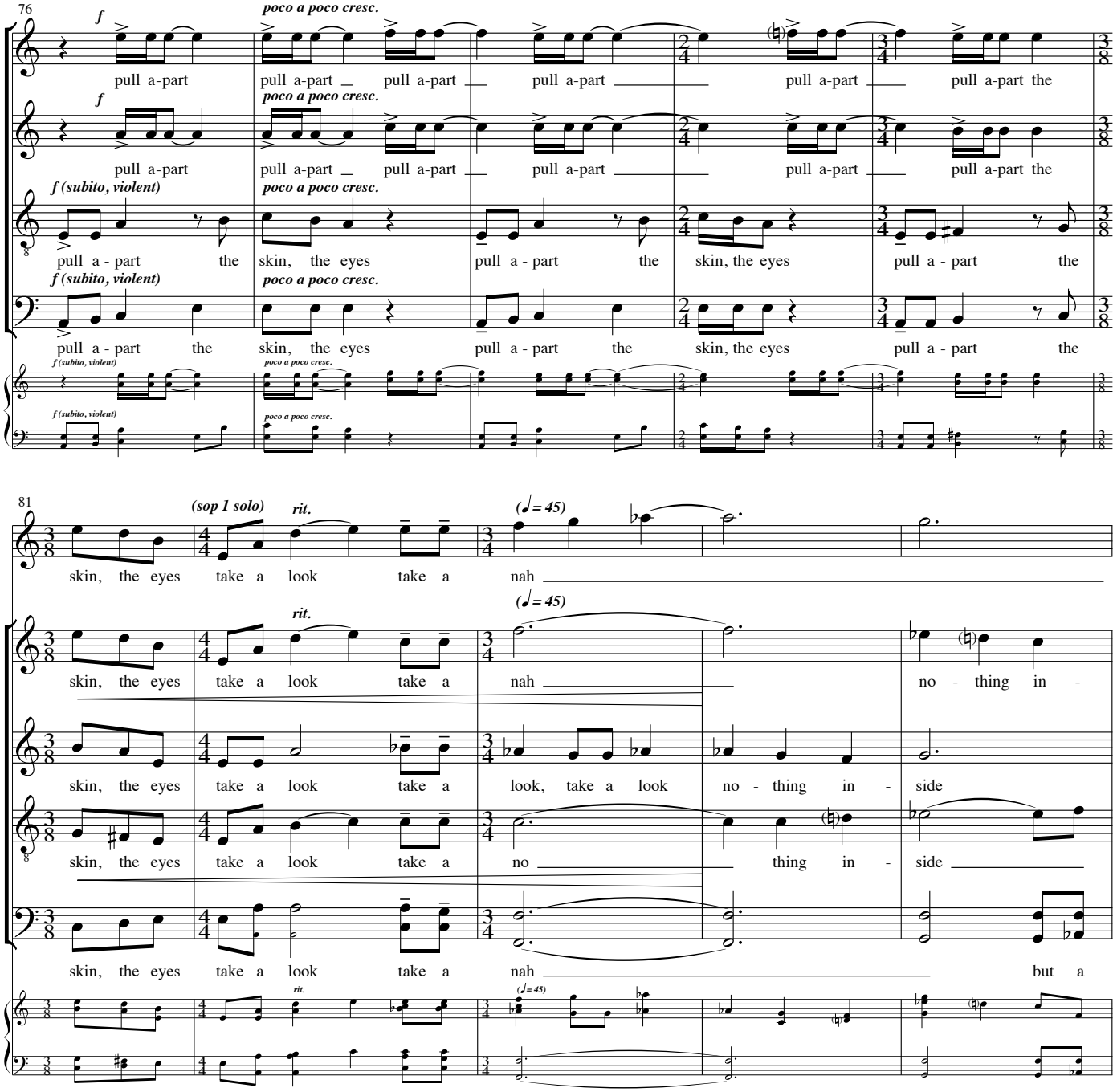

11
C
S
A
T
B
chry-sa-lis un - ra - vel the twi ___ sted thread ___ pull a-part ___
struct a chry-sa-lis un - ra - vel the twi-sted thread pull a-part
pull a - part the
pull a - part the
16
poco a poco cresc.
pull a-part ___ pull a-part ___ pull a-part ___ pull a-part ___ pull a-part the gos - sa - mer
gos - sa - mer pull a - part the gos-sa-mer pull a - part the gos - sa - mer
21
D
take a look, take a look
p
no - thing in - side but a

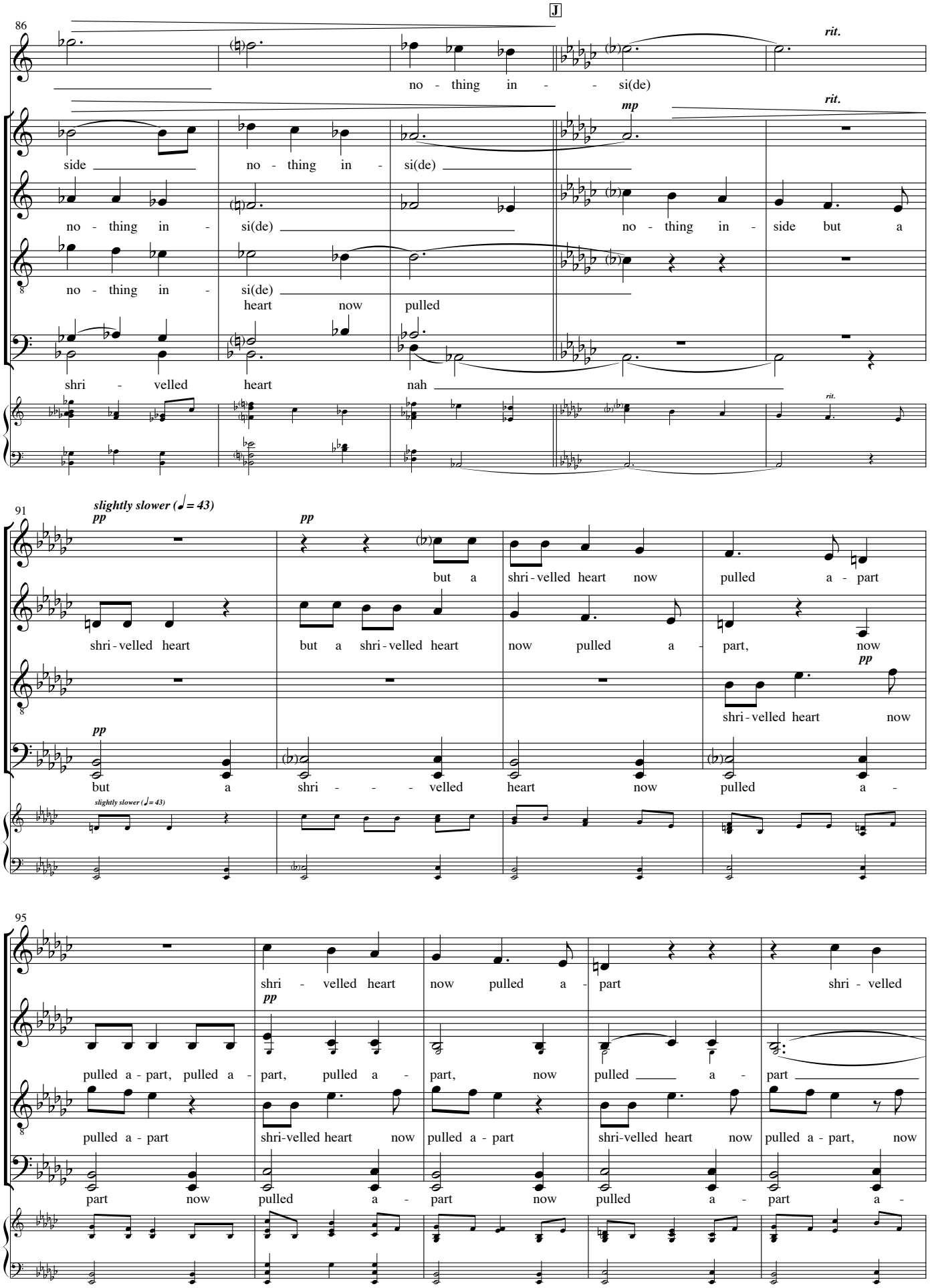

25
S
A
T
B
p
shri - velled corpse
no - - - - -
thing in
si(de)
E
pp
no - thing in -
p
no - thing in -
si(de)
pp
in -
side bu(t)
pp
no -
30
F
faster (♩=60)
side but a shri - velled corpse
side but a shri - velled corpse
thing in - side but a shri - velled corpse
mp
thing in - side but a shri - velled corpse no pulse no pulse no pulse no
faster (♩=60)
34
mp
no
wings
3
mp
no bea-ting heart no bea-ting heart
no bea-ting heart no bea-ting heart
no bea-ting heart no bea-ting heart
pulse no pulse no pulse no
pulse no pulse no pulse no
pulse no pulse no pulse no

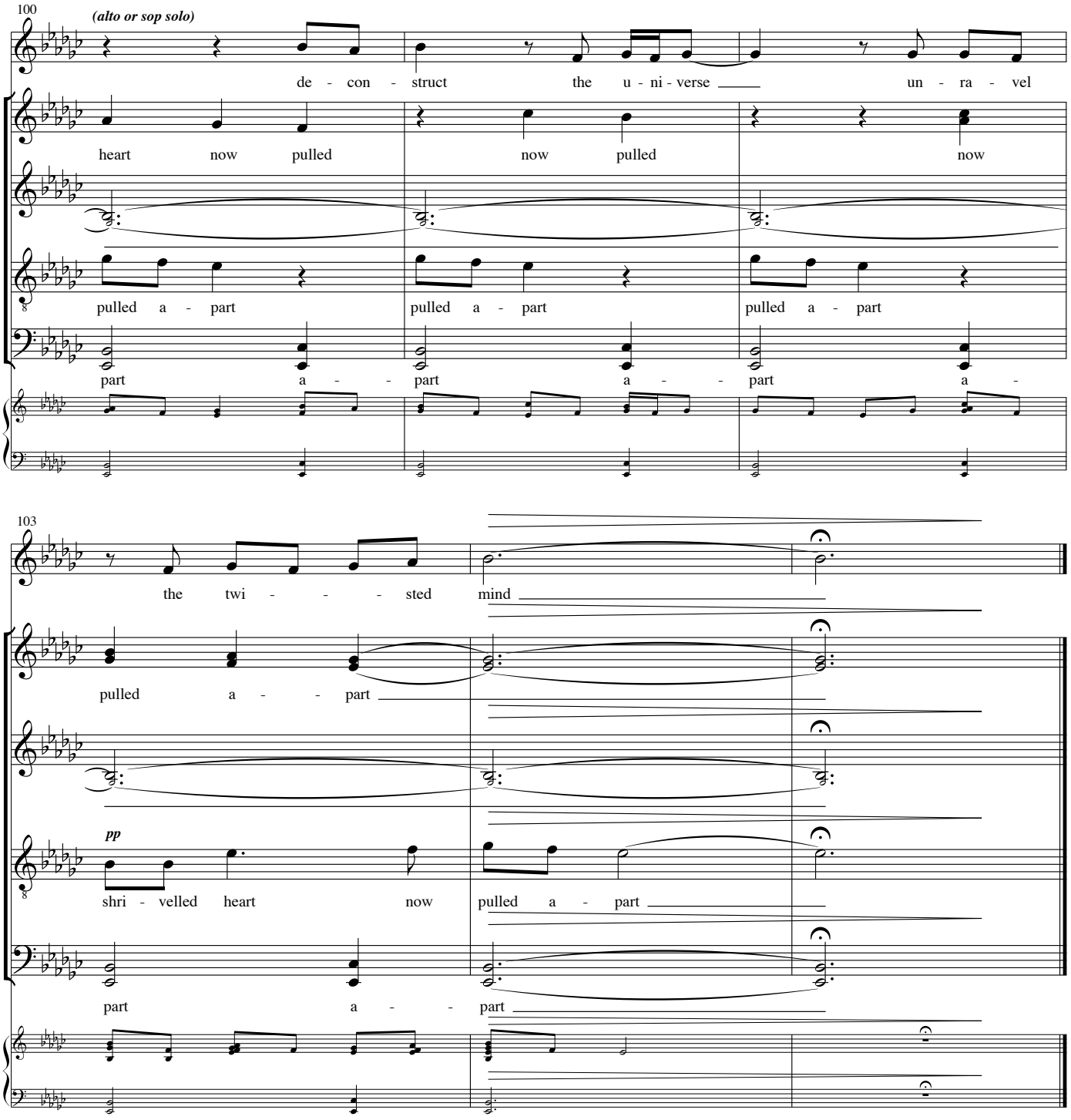

37
S
A
T
B
no wings
no wings
no
mf
no
pulse no bea-ting heart
no bea-ting heart no bea-ting heart
no bea-ting heart no bea-ting heart
no bea-ting heart no bea-ting heart
no bea-ting heart no bea-ting heart
pulse no pulse no pulse no pulse no pulse no pulse no pulse no pulse no pulse no pulse no pulse no
40
wings
no wings
per - haps the ti - niest
no wings
per - haps the ti - niest
hint, per - haps the ti - niest
no bea-ting heart no bea-ting heart
no bea-ting heart no bea-ting heart
no bea-ting heart no bea-ting heart
no bea-ting heart no bea-ting heart
pulse no pulse no pulse no pulse no pulse no pulse no pulse no pulse no pulse no pulse no pulse no
43
hi(nt)
(ee)
hi(nt) per -
haps the ti - niest hint
(ee)
no bea-ting heart no bea-ting heart
no bea-ting heart no bea-ting heart
no bea-ting heart no
pulse no pulse no pulse no pulse no pulse no pulse no pulse no pulse no pulse no


46
rit.
S
per - haps the ti - niest hint
A
per - haps the ti - niest hint per - haps the ti - niest hint, per -
T
bea-ting heart no bea-ting heart per - haps the ti - niest hint
B
pulse no pulse no wings per -
rit.
50
G
ppp
a tempo
S
of a shroud that might have flown of a shroud that might have flown
A
haps a hint of a shroud that might have flown,
T
of a shroud that might have flown, have
B
haps the ti - niest hint of a shroud that might have flown, have
a tempo
55
(sop or alto solo)
H
de-con-struct a chry-sa-lis un - ra - vel the twi sted thread
S
de - con - struct a chry-sa - lis un - ra - vel the twi-sted thread gone
A
now the gift, the gift is gone, now the gift, the gift is gone
T
flown, now the gift is gone gone
B
flown, now the gift is gone


60
(ppp)
(optional solo)
(tutti)
S
A
T
B
gone
gone
gone
gone
is
gone
pp, sadly
now
the
gift
is
gone
66
de -
de -
(pp, optional solo)
de - con - struct
the
u - ni - verse
de - con - struct
the
u - ni - verse
u - ni - verse
71
I
mp
- con - struct
the
u - ni - verse,
un -
ra - vel
the
twi
sted mind
mp
- con - struct
the
u - ni - verse, u - ni - verse,
un - ra - vel
the
twi
sted mind the
twi
sted mind
mp, (tutti)
De - con - struct
the
u - ni - verse,
un -
ra - vel
un - ra - vel the
twi
sted mind
mp
Daw
the
twi
sted mind


76
f
poco a poco cresc.
S
pull a-part pull a-part pull a-part pull a-part pull a-part pull a-part the
A
pull a-part pull a-part pull a-part pull a-part pull a-part pull a-part the
f (subito, violent)
T
pull a - part the skin, the eyes pull a - part the skin, the eyes pull a - part the
B
pull a - part the skin, the eyes pull a - part the skin, the eyes pull a - part the
81
(sop 1 solo)
rit.
(♩= 45)
skin, the eyes take a look take a nah
no - thing in -
skin, the eyes take a look take a look, take a look no - thing in - side
skin, the eyes take a look take a no thing in - side
skin, the eyes take a look take a nah but a


J
86
rit.
no - thing in - - si(de)
mp
rit.
S
side
no - thing in - si(de)
A
no - thing in - si(de)
no - thing in - side but a
T
no - thing in - si(de)
heart now pulled
B
shri - velled heart nah
rit.
91
slightly slower (♩= 43)
pp
pp
but a shri - velled heart now pulled a - part
shri - velled heart but a shri - velled heart now pulled a - part, now
pp
shri - velled heart now
pp
but a shri - - - velled heart now pulled a -
slightly slower (♩= 43)
95
shri - velled heart now pulled a - part shri - velled
pp
pulled a - part, pulled a - part, pulled a - part, now pulled a - part
pulled a - part
shri-velled heart now pulled a - part shri-velled heart now pulled a - part, now
part now pulled a - part now pulled a - part a -


100
(alto or sop solo)
de - con - struct the u - ni - verse un - ra - vel
S
heart now pulled now pulled now
A
T
pulled a - part pulled a - part pulled a - part
B
part a - part a - part a -
103
the twi - - - sted mind
S
pulled a - - part
A
pp
T
shri - velled heart now pulled a - part
B
part a - part