EDWARD ELGAR.

SONG.

The Language of Flowers.

The Poetry by PERCIVAL.

The music composed and dedicated to his sister Lucy.

by *Edward W. Elgar*, May 29, 1872.

This song, written when Edward Elgar was not quite fifteen, is his earlier known dated complete composition to survive, and was unpublished.* It was written for his sister Lucy on her twentieth birthday.

James Gates Percival (1795-1856) was an American geologist and poet. He was a precocious and morbid child, and throughout his versatile life wrote verses on many different subjects and in many different styles. He was enormously talented and in his time was regarded as one of the nation's leading intellectuals.

The Language of Flowers - by James Gates Percival

In Eastern lands they talk in flowers,
And they tell in a garland their loves and cares:
Each blossom that blooms in their garden bowers,
On its leaves a mystic language bears.

The rose is the sign of joy and love,—
Young, blushing love in its earliest dawn;
And the mildness that suits the gentle dove
From the myrtle's snowy flower is drawn.

Innocence shines in the lily's bell,
Pure as a heart in its native heaven;
Fame's bright star, and glory's swell,
By the glossy leaf of the bay are given.

The silent, soft, and humble heart
In the violet's hidden sweetness breathes;
And the tender soul that cannot part,
A twine of evergreen fondly wreathes.

The cypress, that darkly shades the grave,
Is sorrow, that mourns her bitter lot;
And faith, that a thousand ills can brave,
Speaks in thy blue leaves, forget-me-not.

Then gather a wreath from the garden bowers,
And tell the wish of thy heart in flowers.

Transcribed by John Morrison, 2019.
*BL Add. MS 49973A fos. 1-4.

The Language of Flowers.

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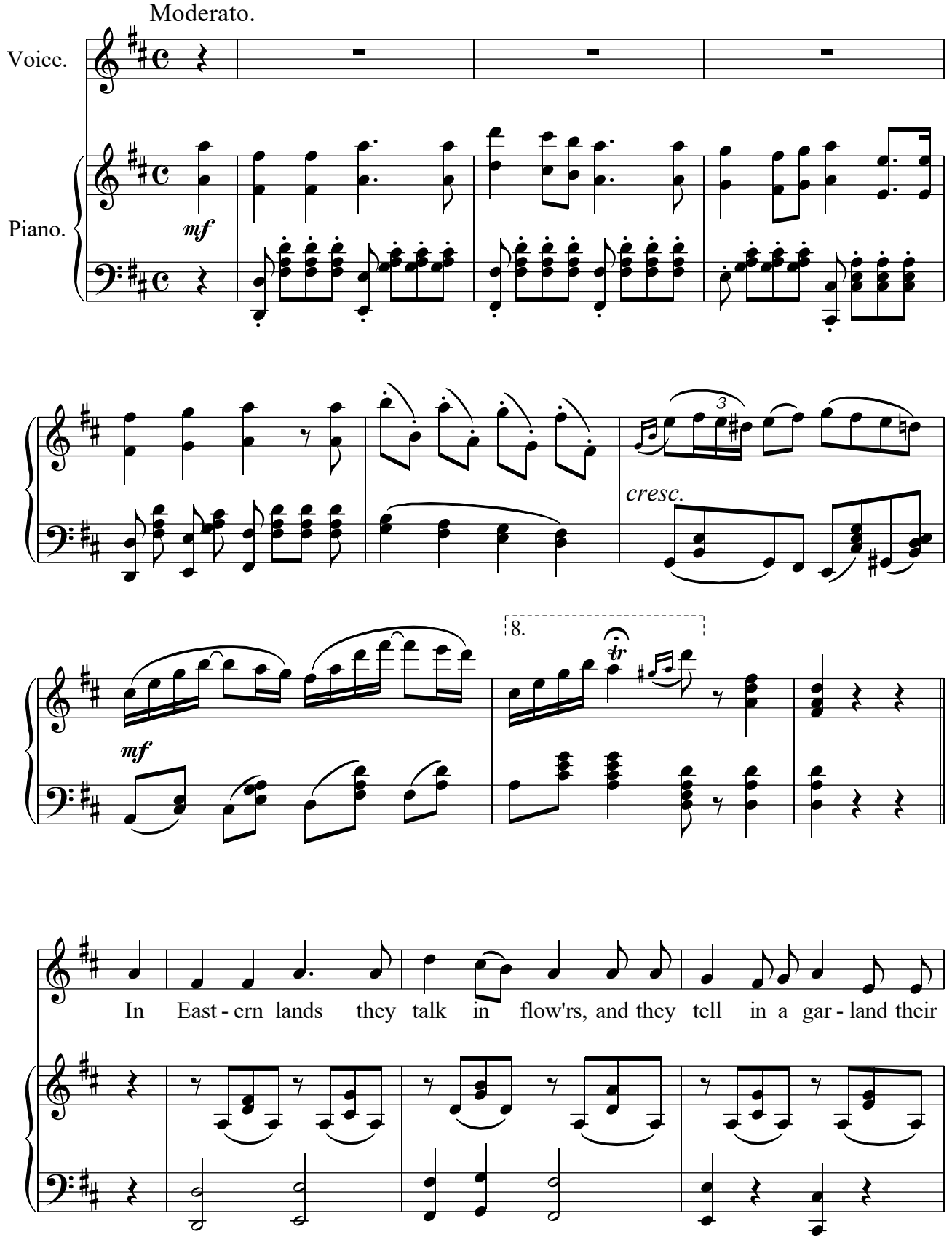
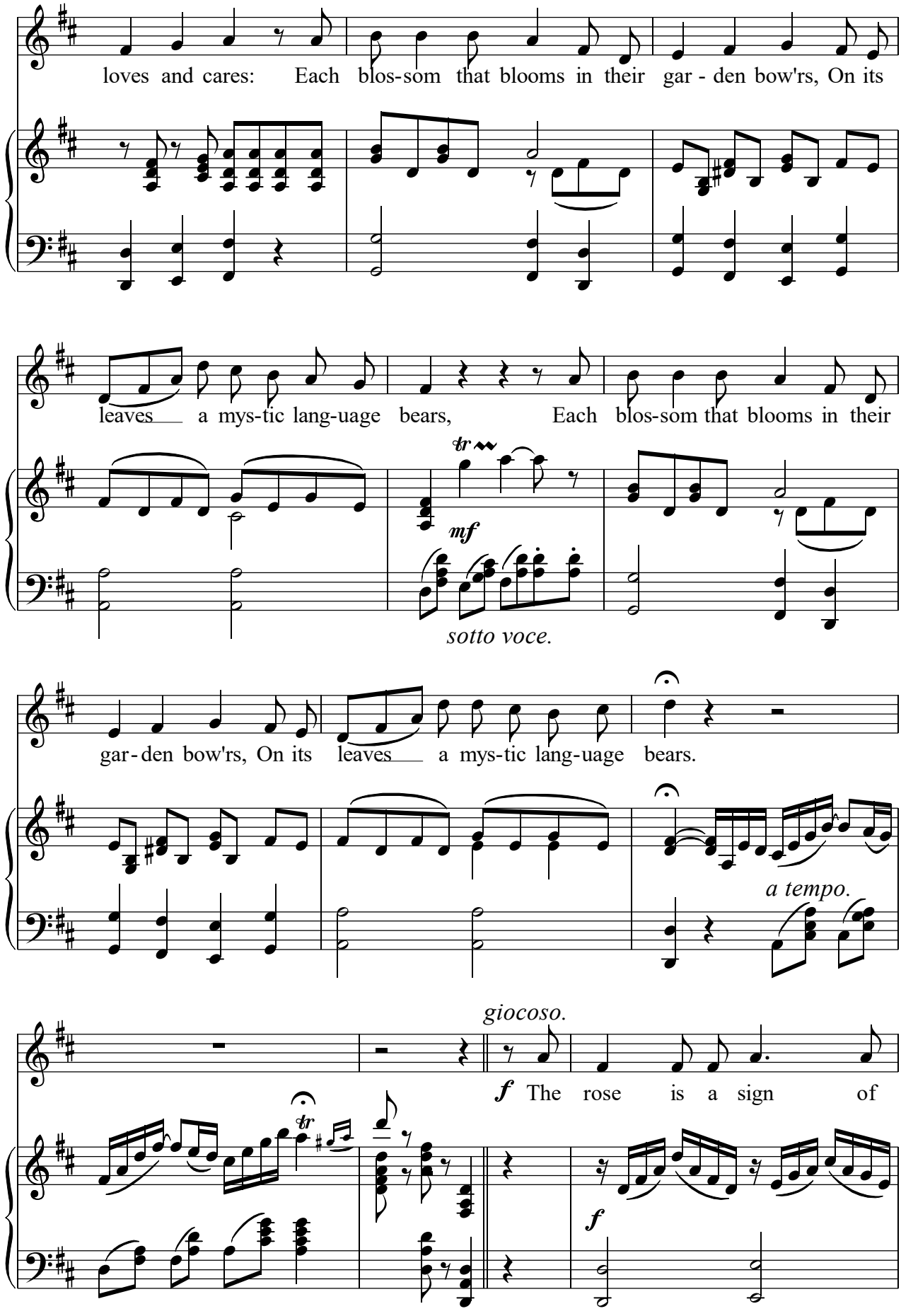
The Poetry by Percival.

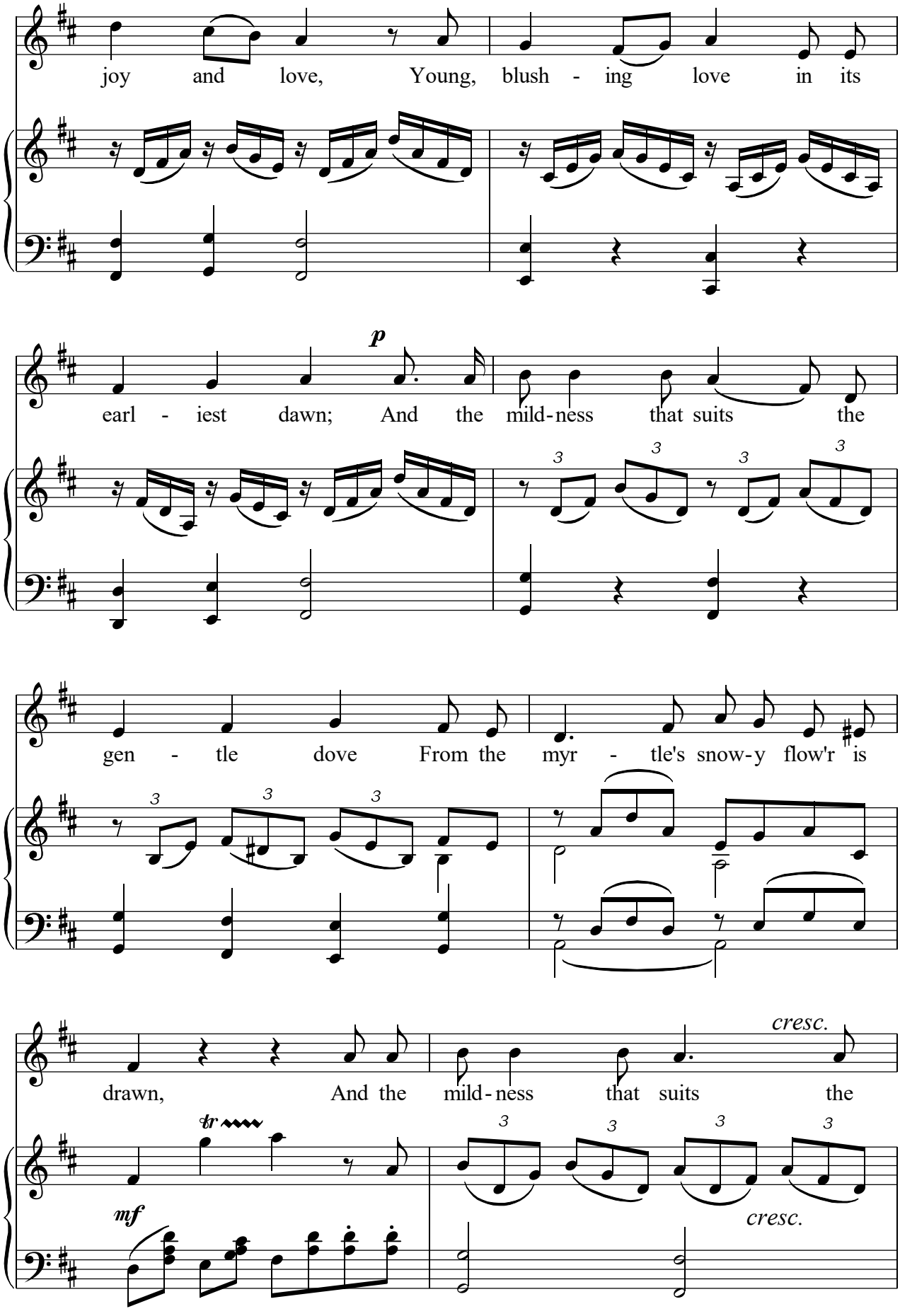
by Edward W. Elgar, May 29, 1872.

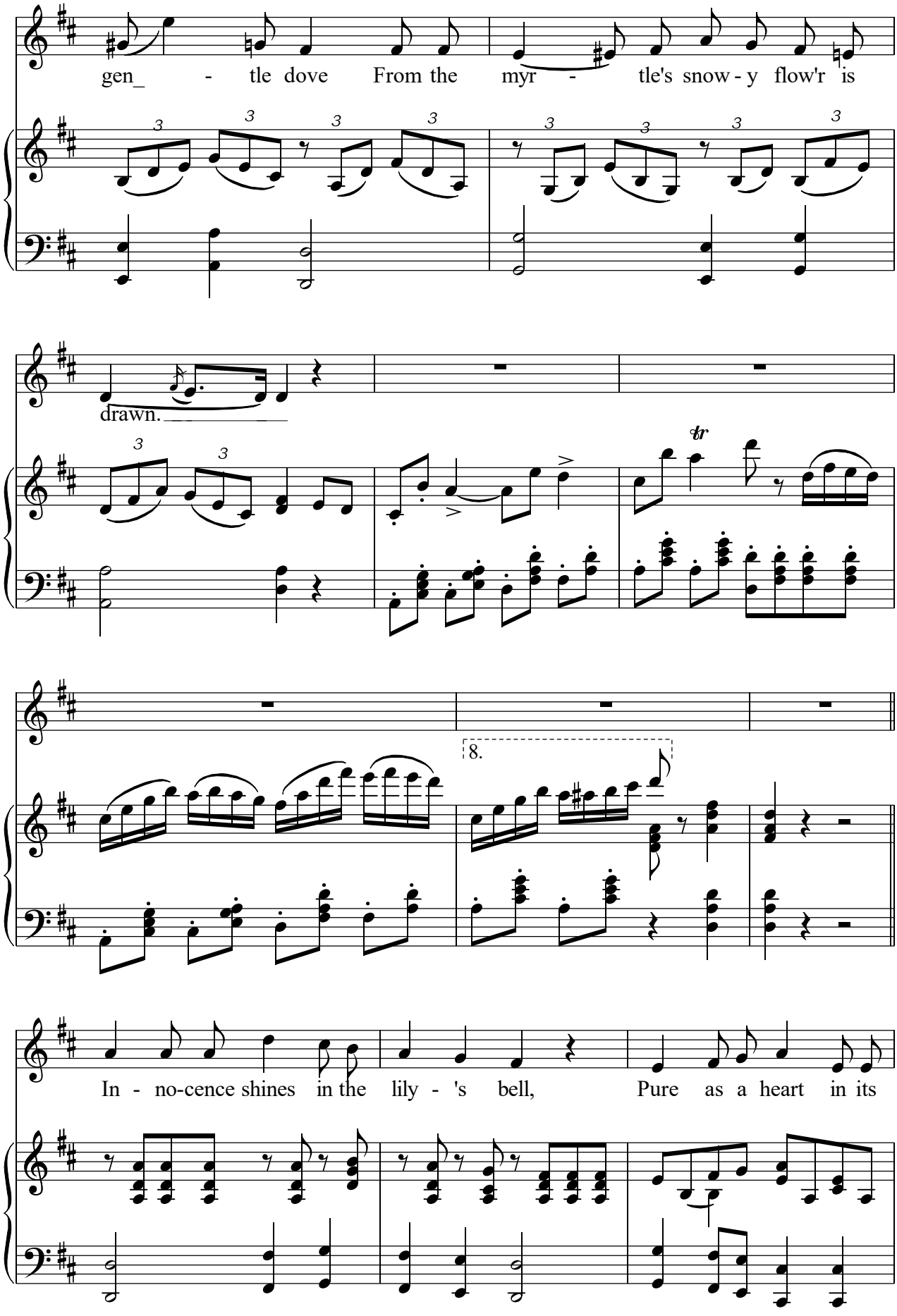
Duration: ca. 4 minutes.

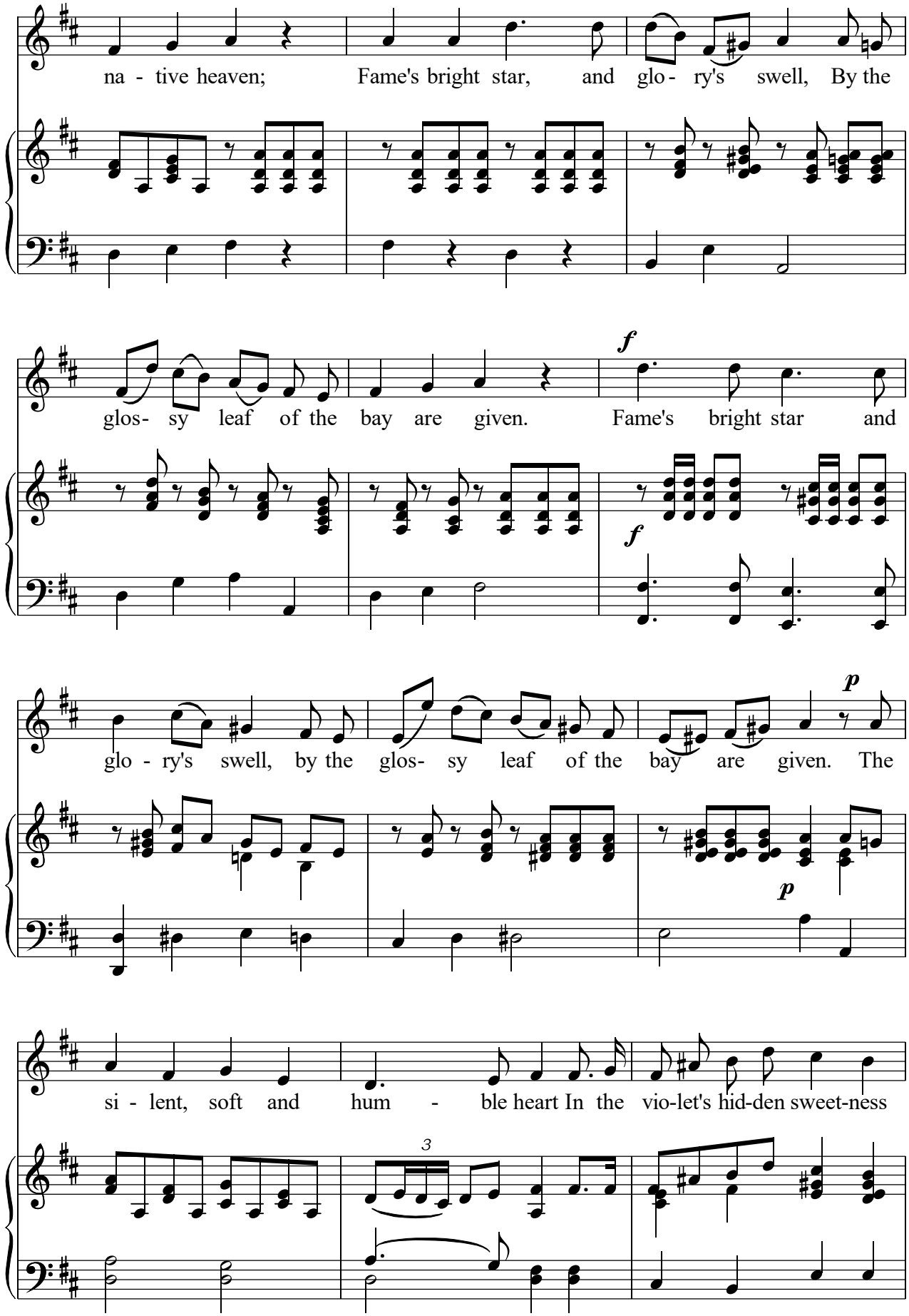
Transcribed by John Morrison, 2019.

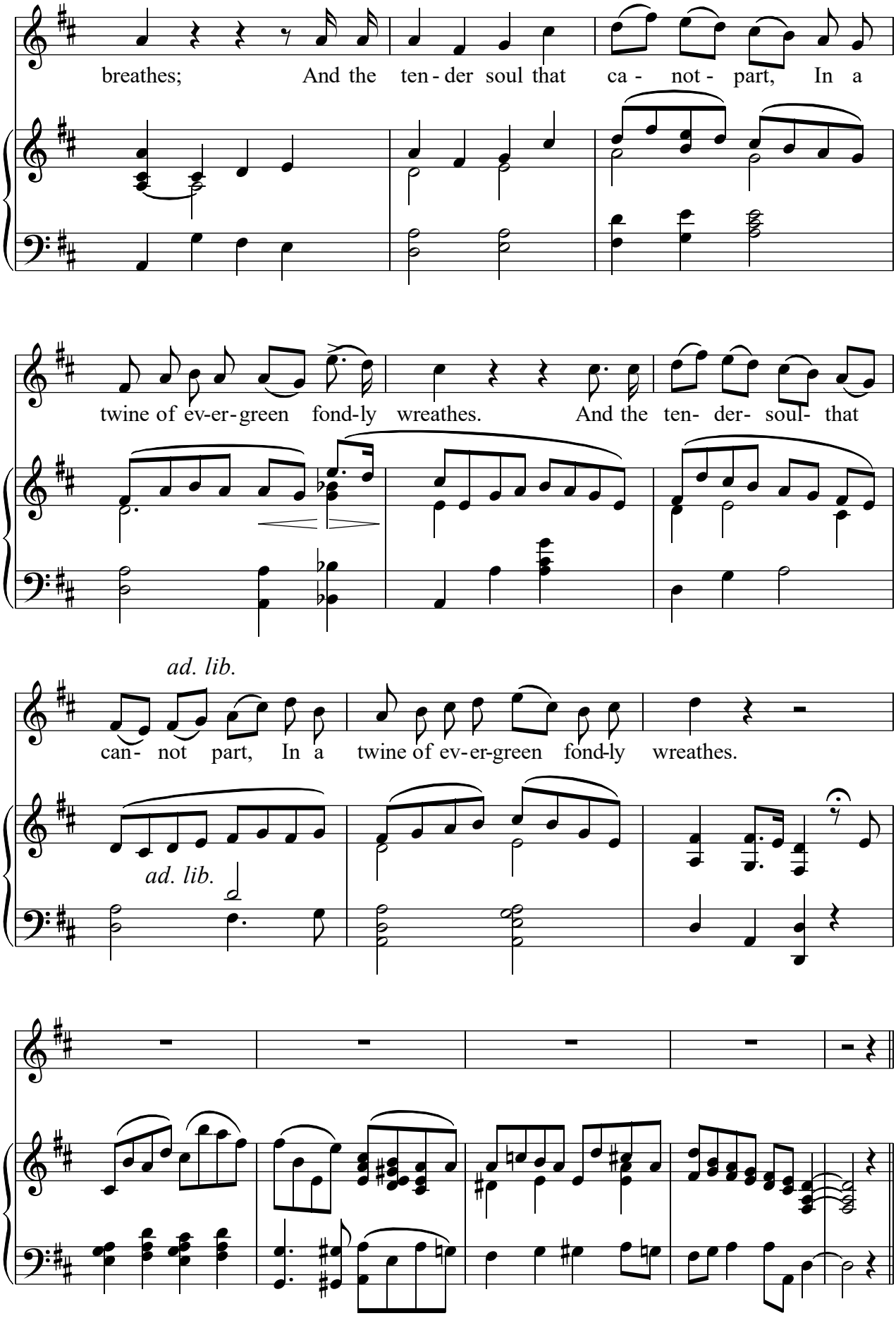


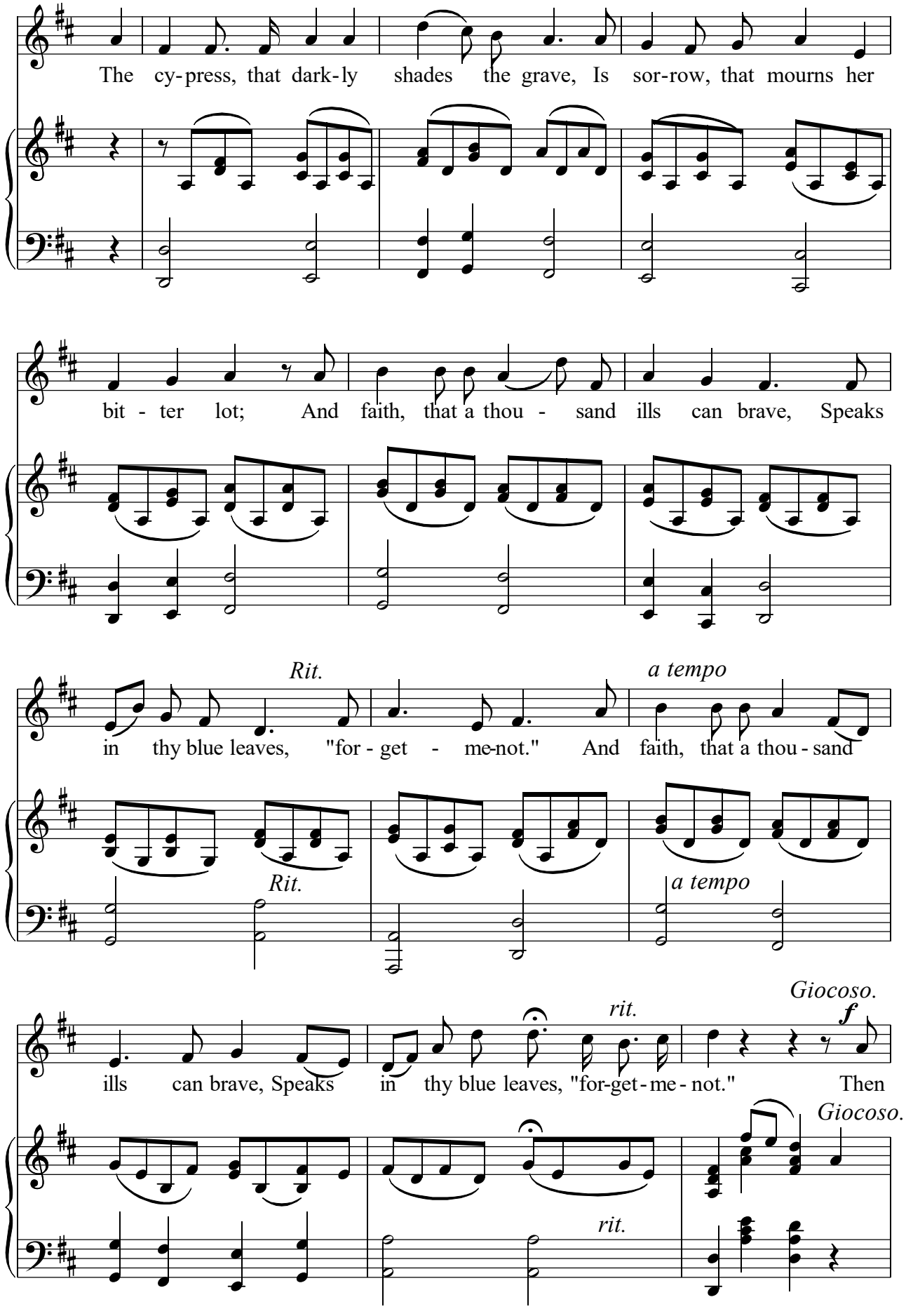

loves and cares: Each blos-som that blooms in their gar - den bow'rs, On its
leaves a mys-tic lang-uage bears, Each blos-som that blooms in their
tr
mf
sotto voce.
gar - den bow'rs, On its leaves a mys-tic lang-uage bears.
a tempo.
giocoso.
f The rose is a sign of
tr
f

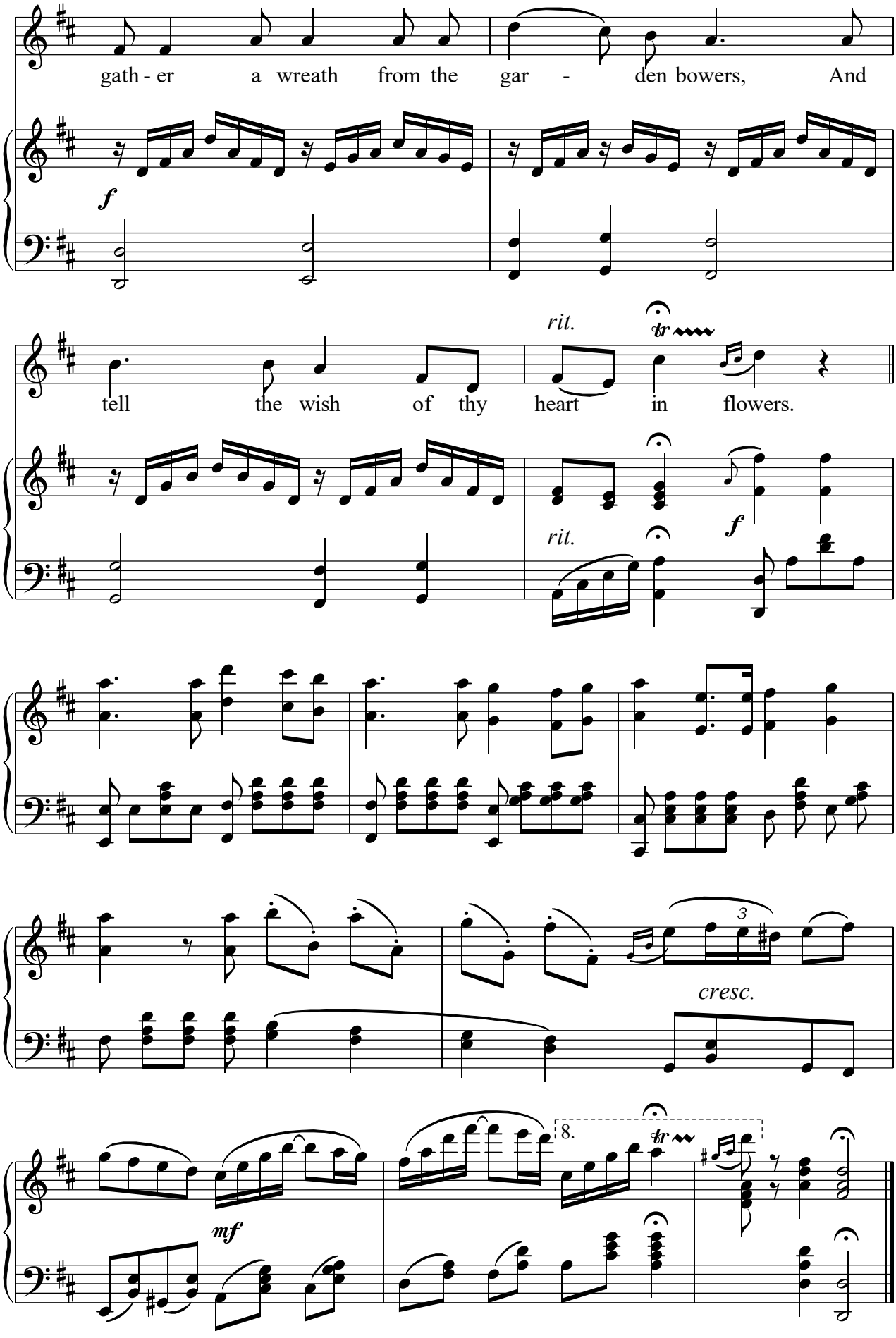

joy and love, Young, blush - ing love in its
p
earl - iest dawn; And the mild-ness that suits the
gen - tle dove From the myr - tle's snow-y flow'r is
drawn, And the mild-ness that suits the
cresc.
tr
mf
cresc.


gen_ - tle dove From the myr - tle's snow - y flow'r is
drawn.
tr
8.
In - no-cence shines in the lily - 's bell, Pure as a heart in its


na - tive heaven; Fame's bright star, and glo - ry's swell, By the
glos- sy leaf of the bay are given. Fame's bright star and
glo - ry's swell, by the glos- sy leaf of the bay are given. The
si - lent, soft and hum - ble heart In the vio-let's hid-den sweet-ness
f
f
p
p
3


breathes; And the ten - der soul that ca - not - part, In a
twine of ev-er-green fond-ly wreathes. And the ten- der- soul- that
ad. lib.
can- not part, In a twine of ev-er-green fond-ly wreathes.
ad. lib.


The cy-press, that dark-ly shades the grave, Is sor-row, that mourns her
bit - ter lot; And faith, that a thou - sand ills can brave, Speaks
Rit.
a tempo
in thy blue leaves, "for - get - me-not." And faith, that a thou - sand
Rit.
a tempo
Giocoso.
rit.
f
ills can brave, Speaks in thy blue leaves, "for-get-me-not." Then
Giocoso.
rit.


gath - er a wreath from the gar - den bowers, And
f
rit.
tr
tell the wish of thy heart in flowers.
rit.
f
3
cresc.
8.
tr
mf