Seal Lullaby

for unaccompanied SATB chorus

Perusal Score
Not for performance

AJ Harbison

Muse Room Press

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Thank you for your interest in my music!

Seal Lullaby
(2019)

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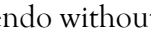
Program Notes

I first discovered Rudyard Kipling's poem "Seal Lullaby" in a book of lullabies, night songs and poems that my daughter and I checked out of the library. We both fell in love with it immediately. I was captivated by the sound of the words as I read them out loud, and the alliteration was delightful — "weary wee flipperling" (my daughter's favorite phrase in the poem), "asleep in the arms of the slow-swinging seas" (my favorite phrase). It was one of the most lyrical poems I had read in a long time, and I decided to set it to music, in versions for mixed chorus (SATB) and women's chorus (SSAA).

The music is simple, as a lullaby should be, and shifts back and forth between the time signatures of 3/4 and 6/8 to imitate the long rolling waves. Many of the vocal lines imitate the gentle rocking of the "slow-swinging seas." I divided the eight-line poem into two stanzas of four lines; each stanza has similar (but not identical) music, with a harmonic shift in the third line. In the first stanza, the harmonic shift takes us to a new key; in the second stanza, the shift brings us back home.

Seal Lullaby is dedicated to my daughter, my own wee flipperling.

Performance Notes

A crescendo and diminuendo without a dynamic marking in the middle (i.e. ) indicates a slight dynamic increase without reaching the next dynamic level. For example, if the dynamic before the crescendo is *mezzo forte*, the highest dynamic level reached before the diminuendo should be *più mezzo forte*, not *forte*.

Duration

ca. 3 minutes 30 seconds

This work is dedicated to my daughter, my own wee flipperling;
she discovered this poem with me, and loved it just as much as I did.

Seal Lullaby

by Rudyard Kipling

Oh hush thee, my baby, the night is behind us,
  And black are the waters that sparkled so green.
The moon, o'er the combers, looks downward to find us
  At rest in the hollows that rustle between.
Where billow meets billow, there soft be thy pillow;
  Ah, weary wee flipperling, curl at thy ease!
The storm shall not wake thee, nor shark overtake thee,
  Asleep in the arms of the slow-swinging seas.

Text by Rudyard Kipling (1893). Public Domain.

to my daughter, my own wee flipperling

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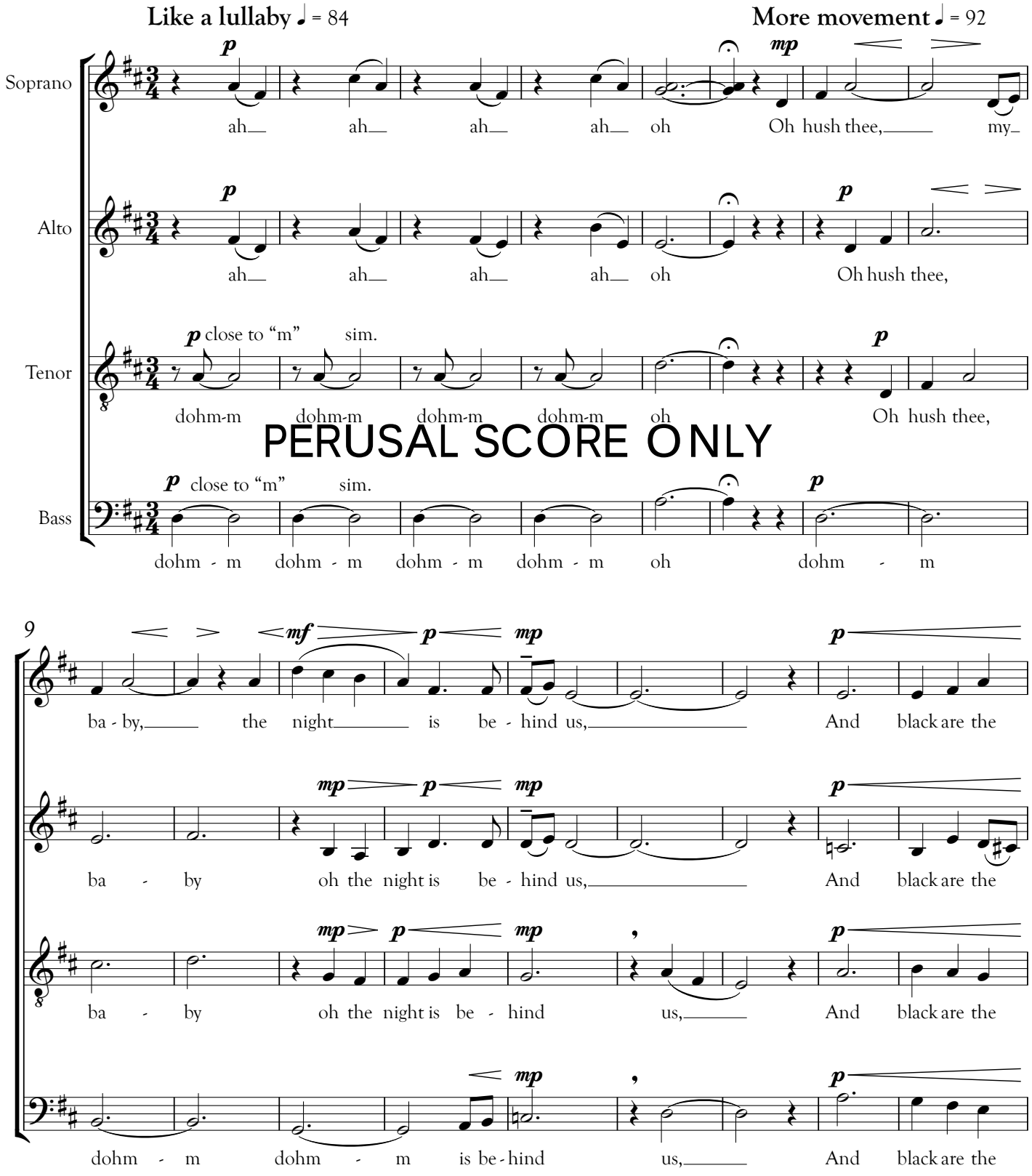
Seal Lullaby

Rudyard Kipling (1893)

AJ Harbison (2019)



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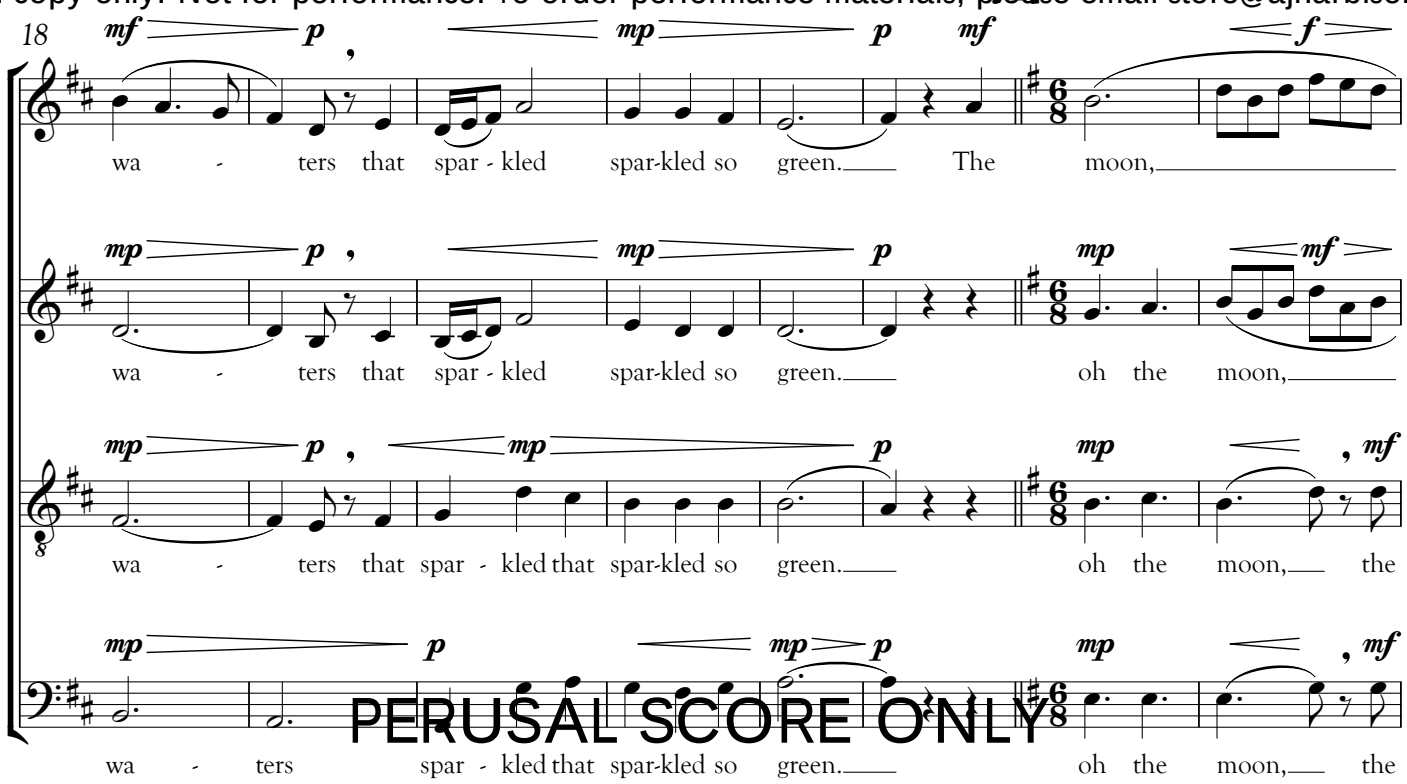

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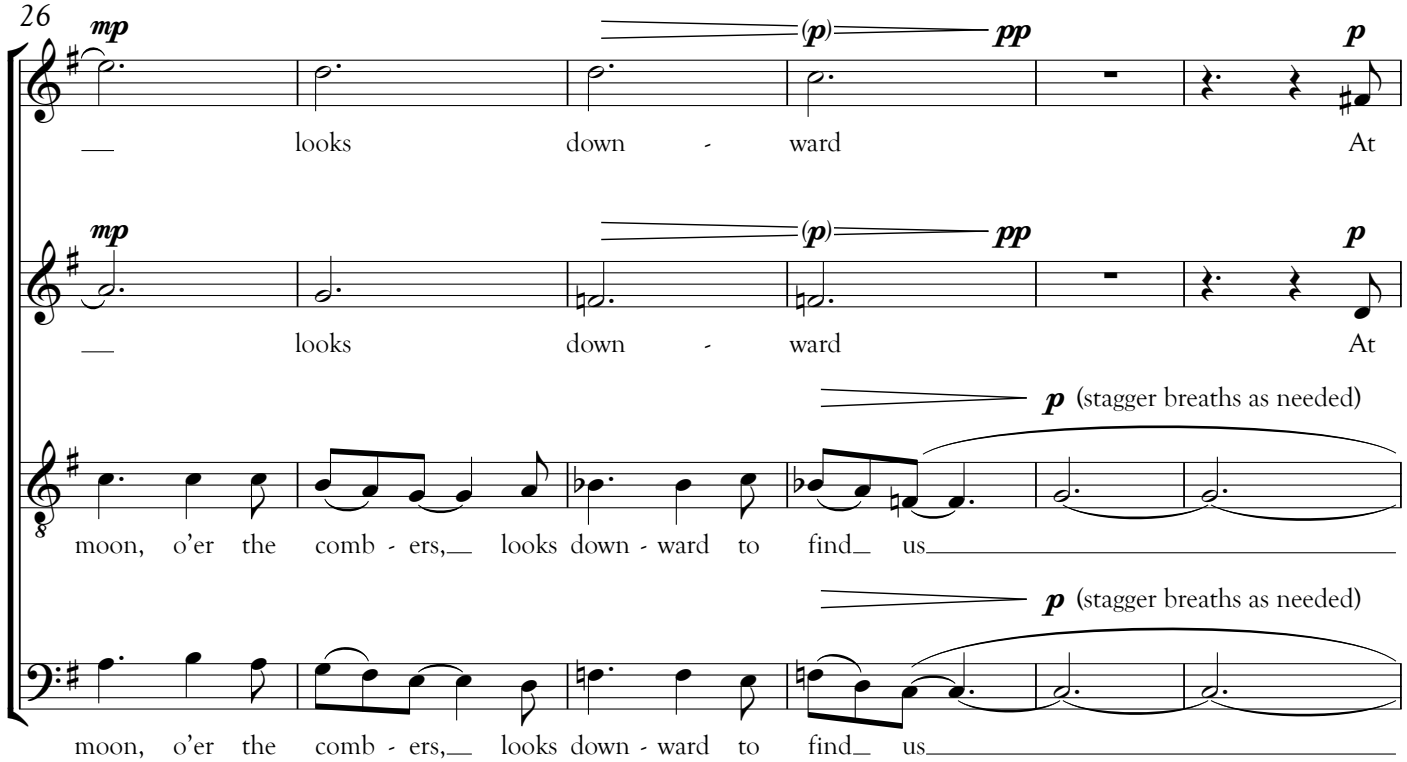

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32

mp mp

rest at rest at rest At rest in the

mp mp

rest at rest at rest At rest in the

PERUSAL SCORE ONLY

40

♪=♪

Tempo primo ♩= 84

p

hol - lows that rus - tle be - tween. ah ah

p

hol - lows that rus - tle be - tween. ah ah

p

hol - lows dohm-m dohm-m

p

hol - lows dohm - m dohm - m

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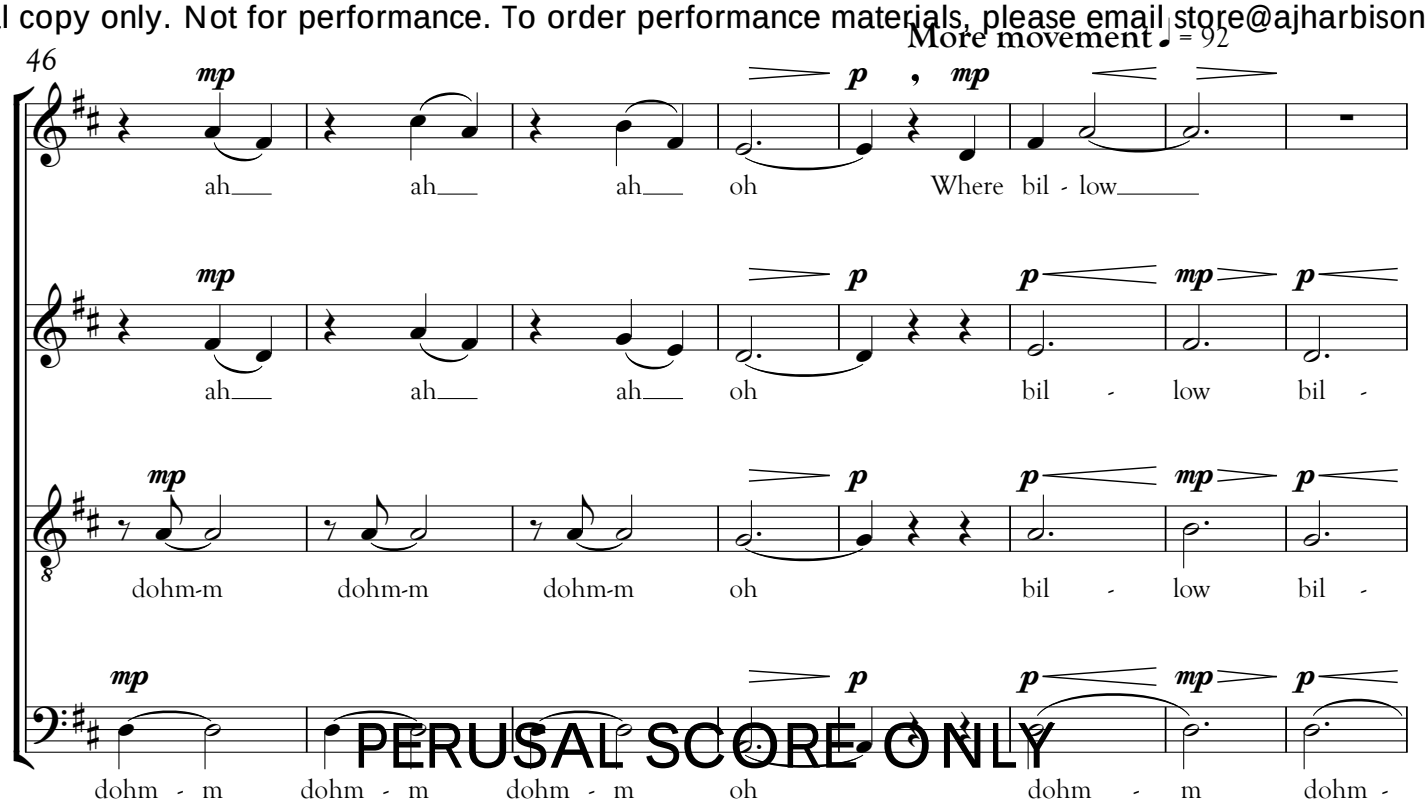

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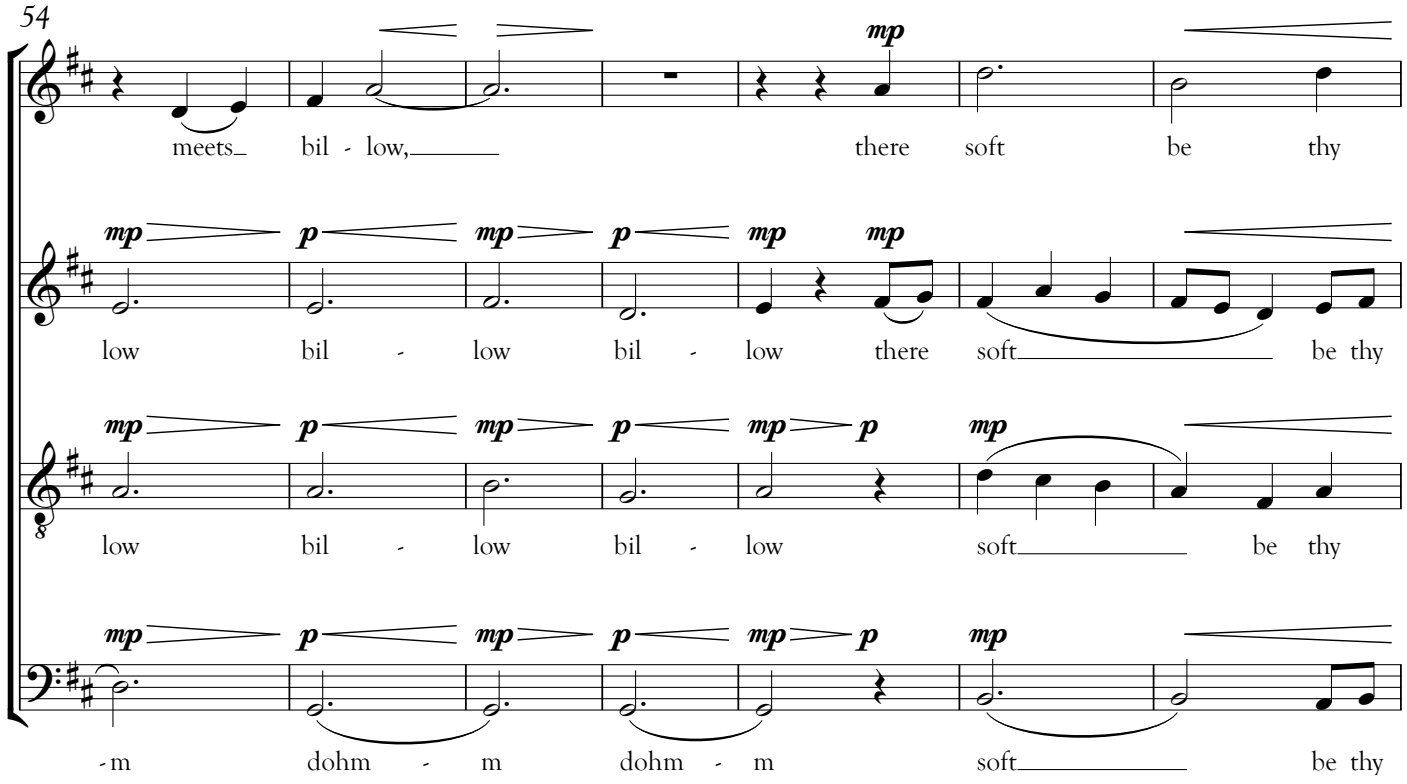

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61

pil-low; Ah, wea-ry wee flip-per-ling, curl curl curl at thy

pil-low; Ah, wea-ry wee flip-per-ling, curl curl curl at thy

pil-low; Ah, wea-ry wee flip-per-ling, curl curl curl at thy

pil-low; Ah, wea-ry wee flip-per-ling, curl curl curl at thy

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70

ease! The storm shall not wake thee, nor shark o-ver-

ease! storm oh the storm shall not wake thee, nor shark no nor shark o-ver-

ease! storm oh the storm shall not wake thee, shark no nor shark o-ver-

ease! storm shall not wake thee, shark o-ver-

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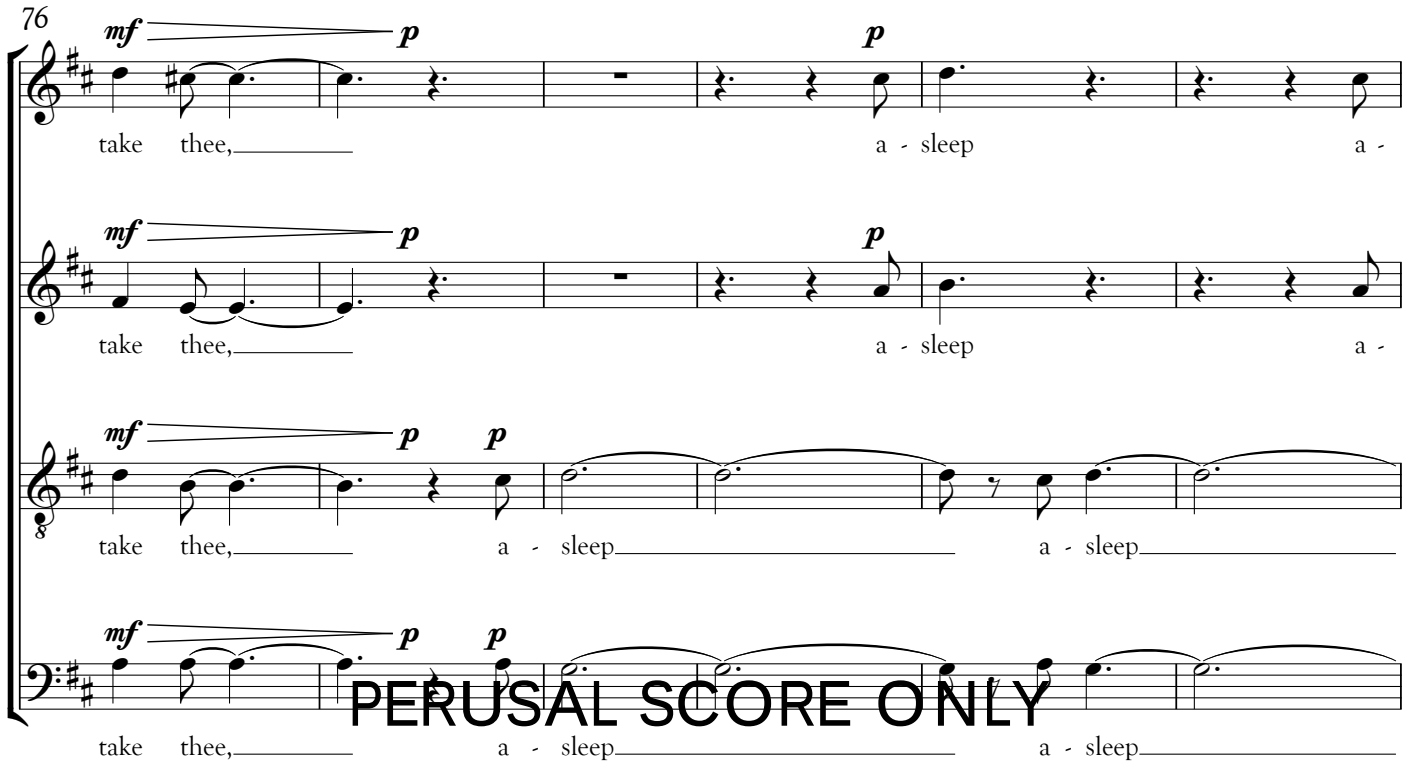

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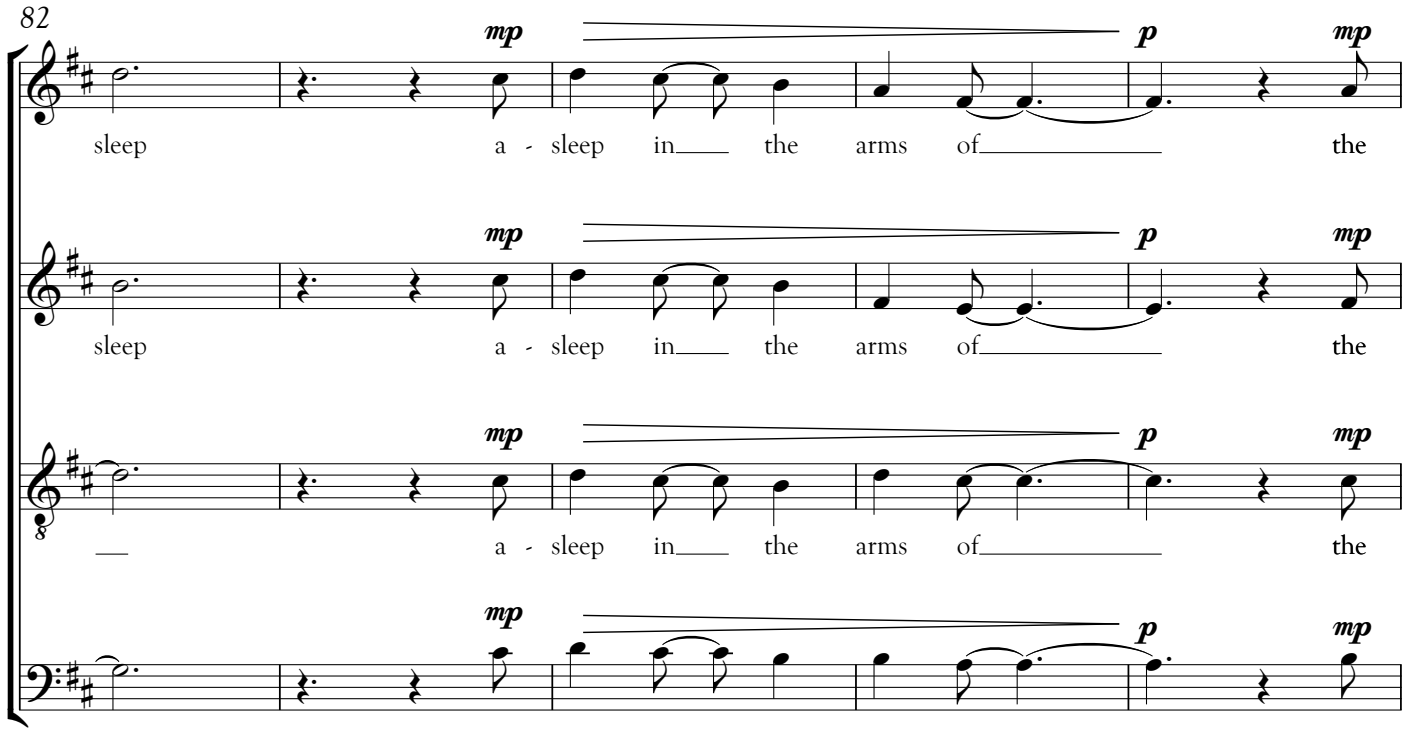

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87

slight rit.

Tempo primo ♩ = 84

slow slow slow slow swing - ing seas.

slow slow slow slow swing - ing

slow slow slow swing - ing

slow slow slow swing - ing

PERUSAL SCORE ONLY

95

close to "m"

ah ah dohm - m

close to "m"

ah ah dohm - m

dohm-m dohm-m dohm-m dohm-m dohm - m

dohm - m dohm - m dohm - m dohm - m dohm - m

Kansas City, 2019