musings

by Hannah Cai Sobel

text inspired by the queer and reflective conversations I share with Reuben Gelley Newman

"musings" (of a beard couple) for soprano, flute, alto saxophone, cello, and piano, is a selection of quotes pulled from my texts with my dear friend and poet, Reuben Gelley Newman. Reuben and I debrief everything: the simple things we feel from day to day, the larger patterns we've recognized about ourselves, the way we think, the way we love, and the way we interact with the world around us. Reuben, a queer, white man from NYC, and me, a queer, nonbinary person of color, also from NYC have many shared experiences and while sometimes we respond to these experiences in the exact same ways – sometimes we respond completely differently.

"musings" is a selection of some of the descriptors of said reactions to the way Reuben and I experience life.

1. strange
   still strange that they're all straight
2. strophe
   I never really like strophic music anyway
3. them
   they were a necessary peacefulness
4. catharsis
   calling people is quite scary but what if I did for necessary catharsis?
5. ready
   we talked about queerness and neurodivergence but I wasn't ready
6. hate
   I think maybe she hates me but I don't have a reason why
7. love
   which humans which will I love today?
8. okay
   tomorrow will maybe be okay

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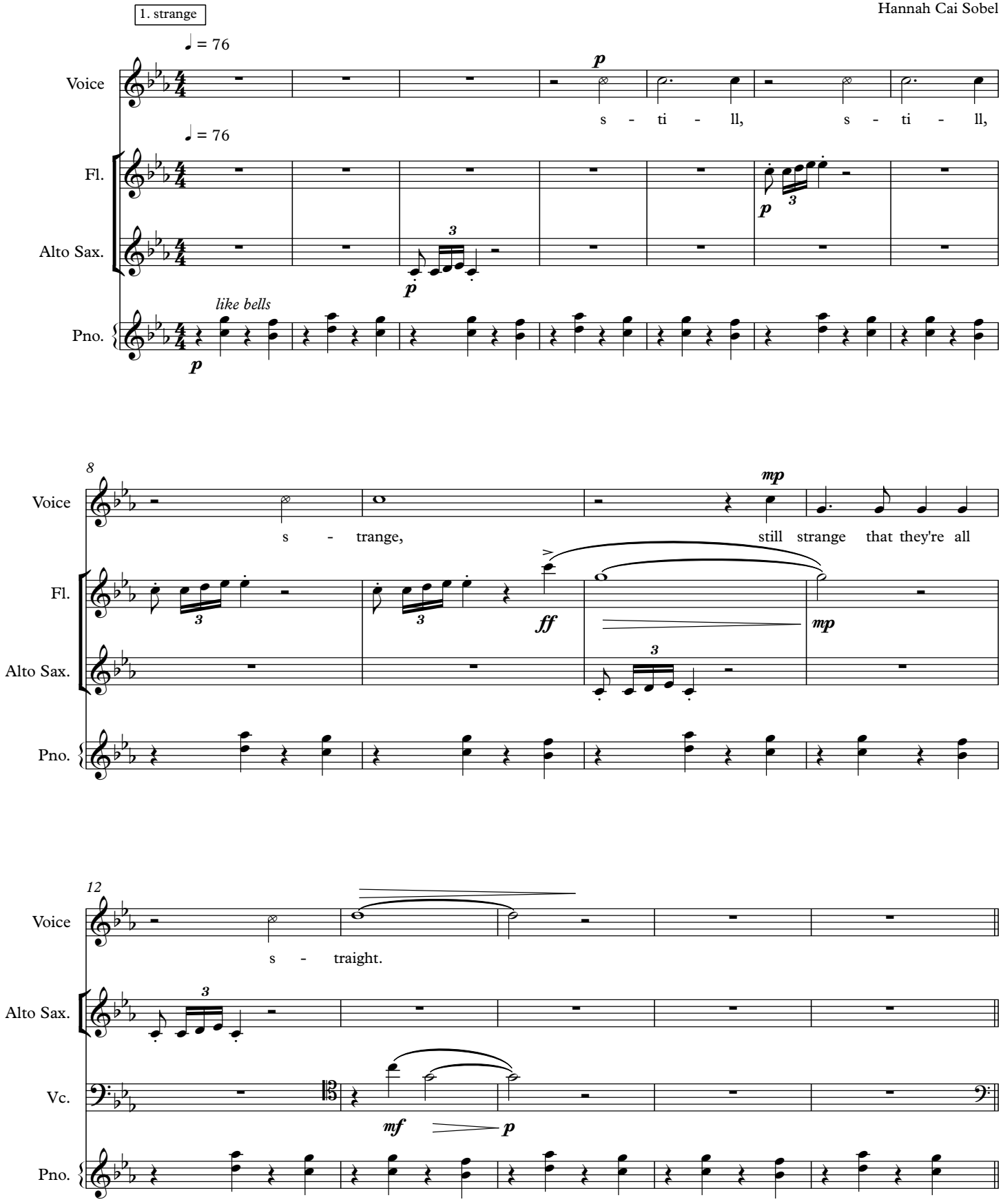

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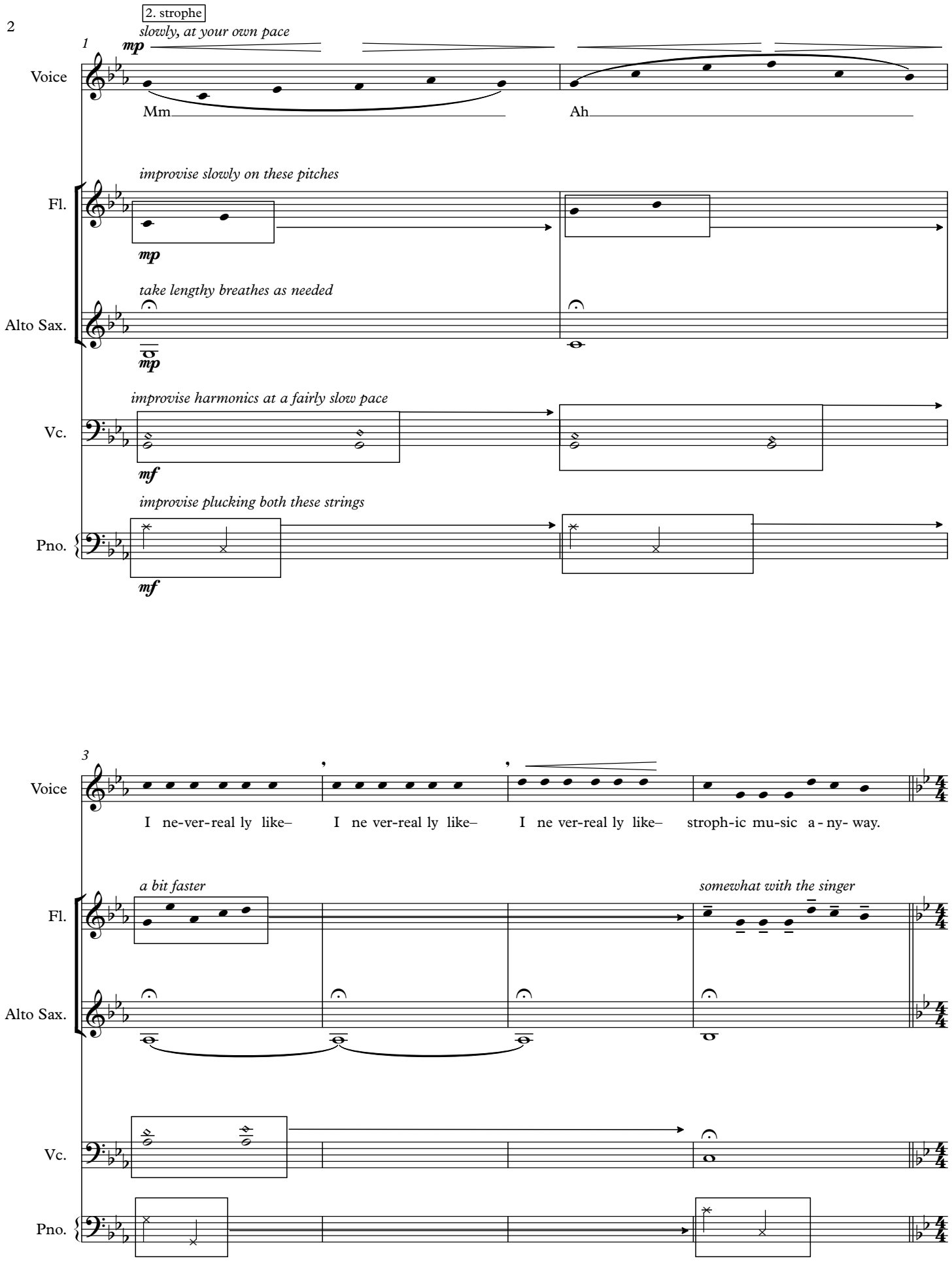
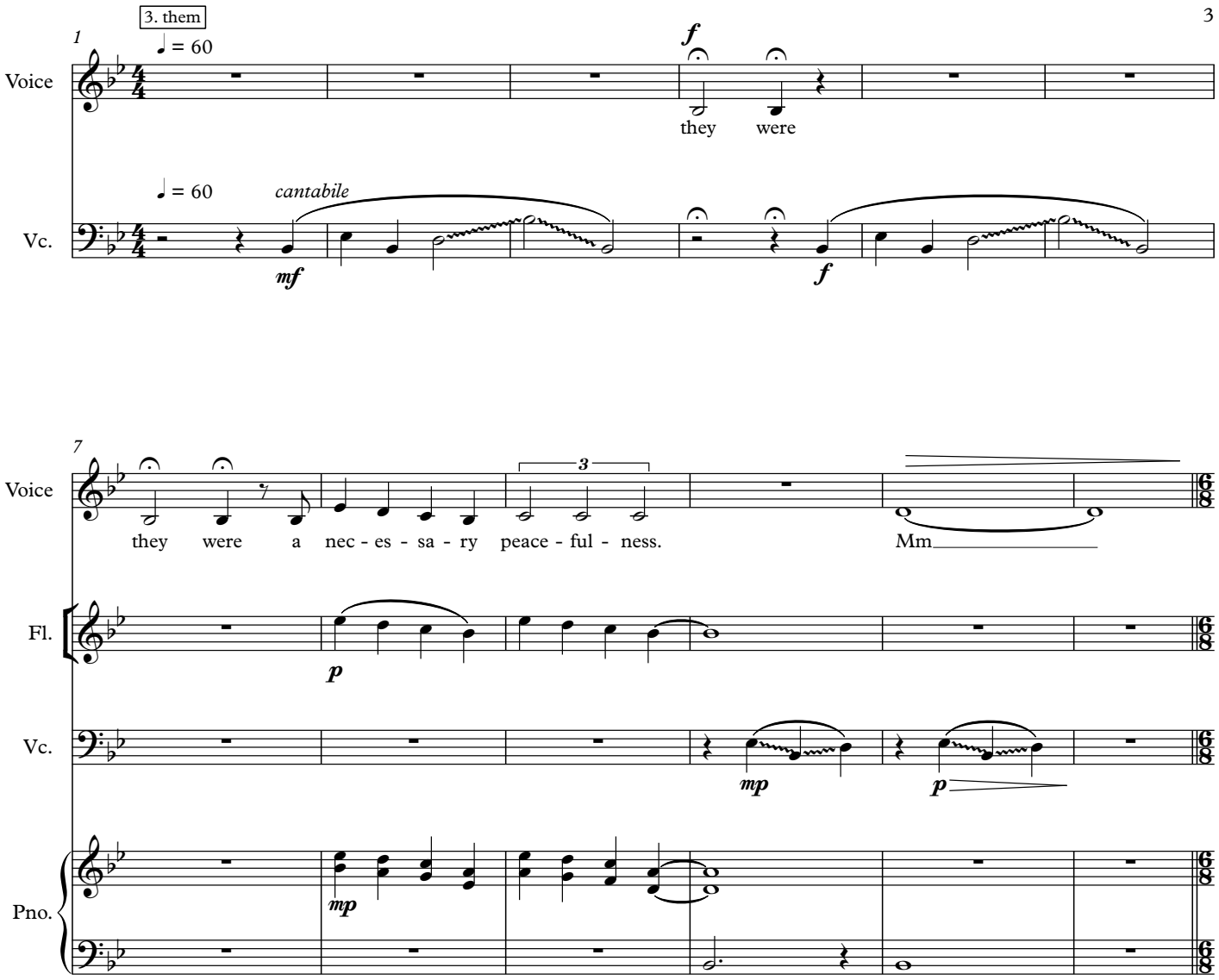
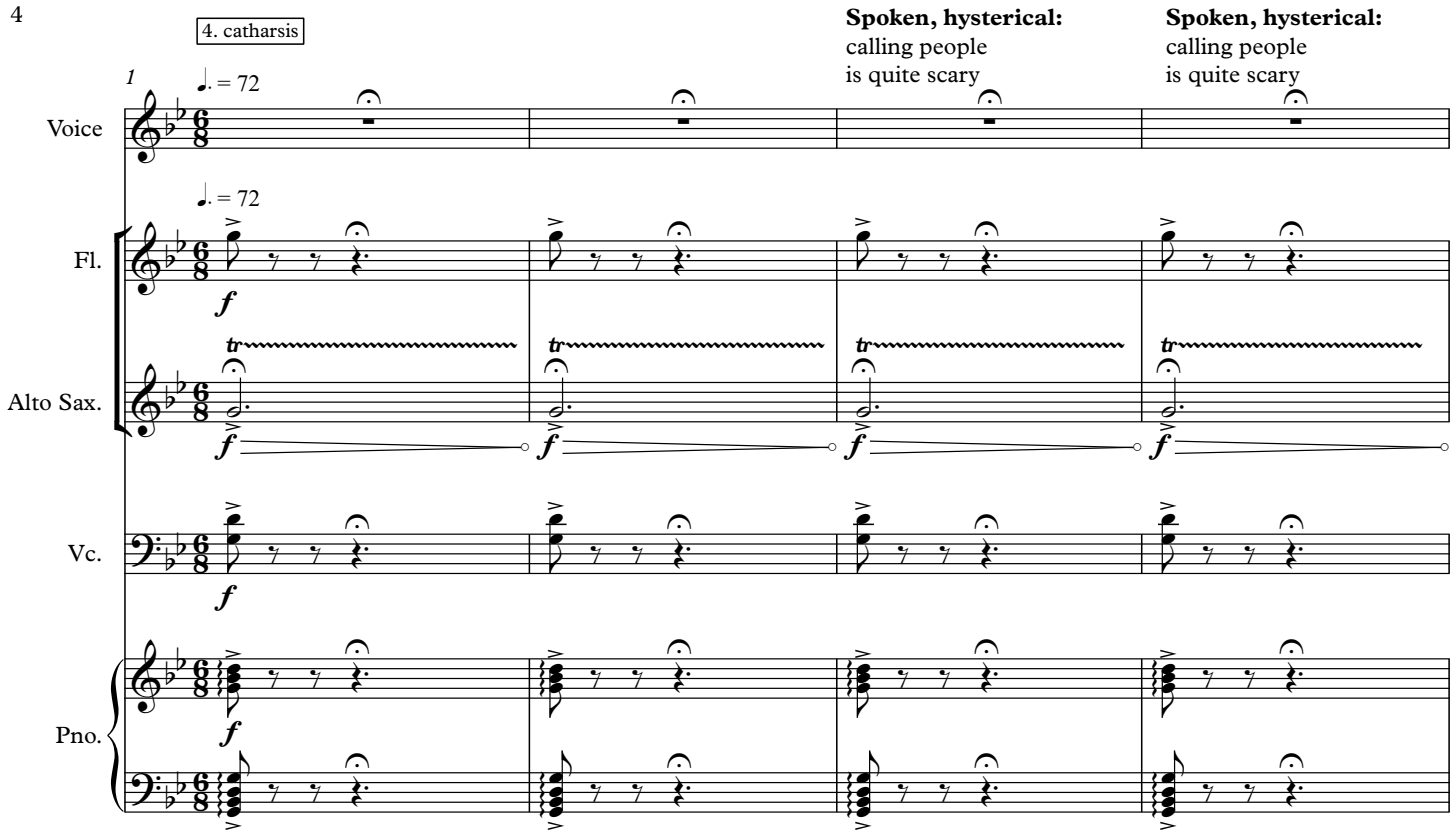
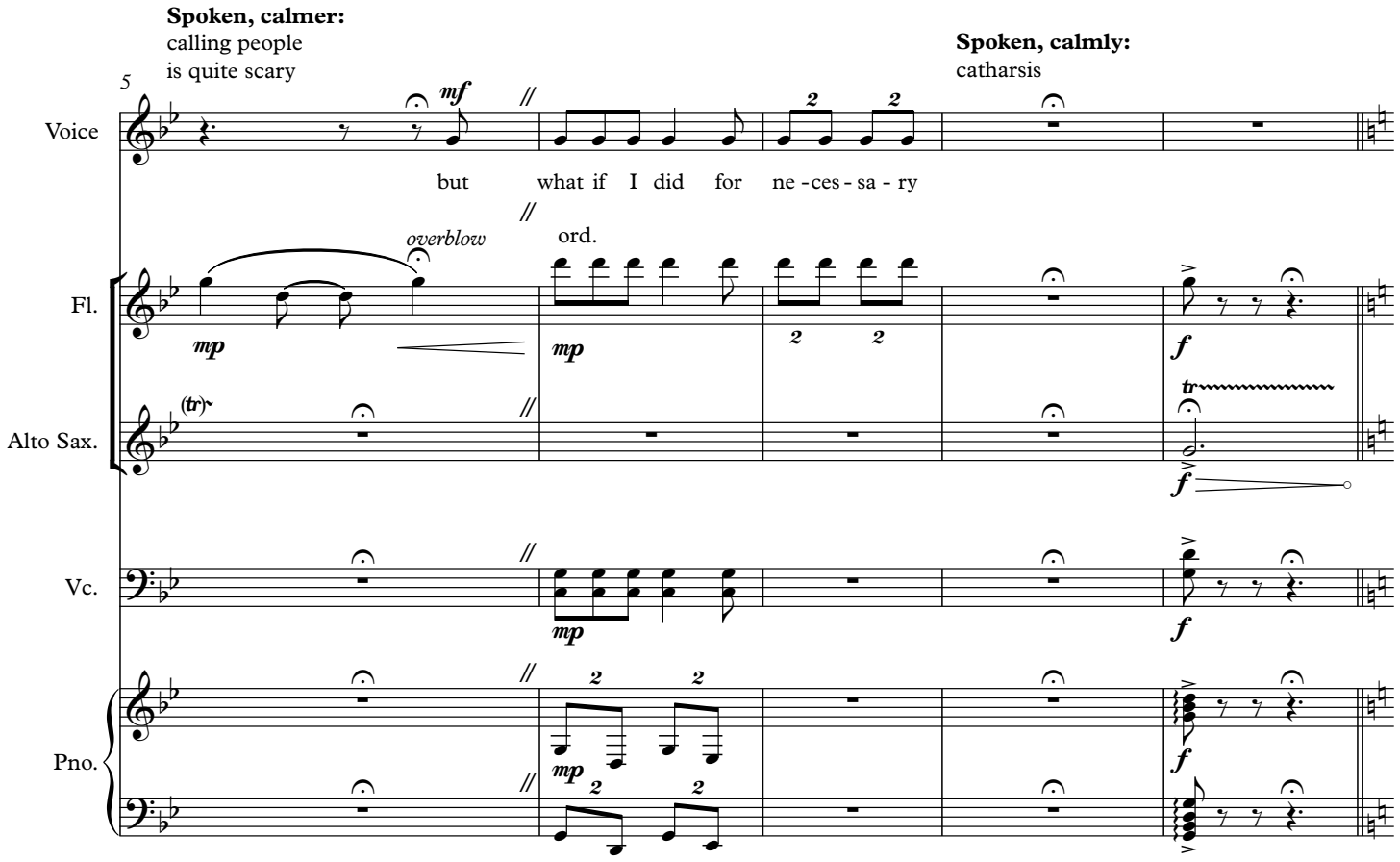
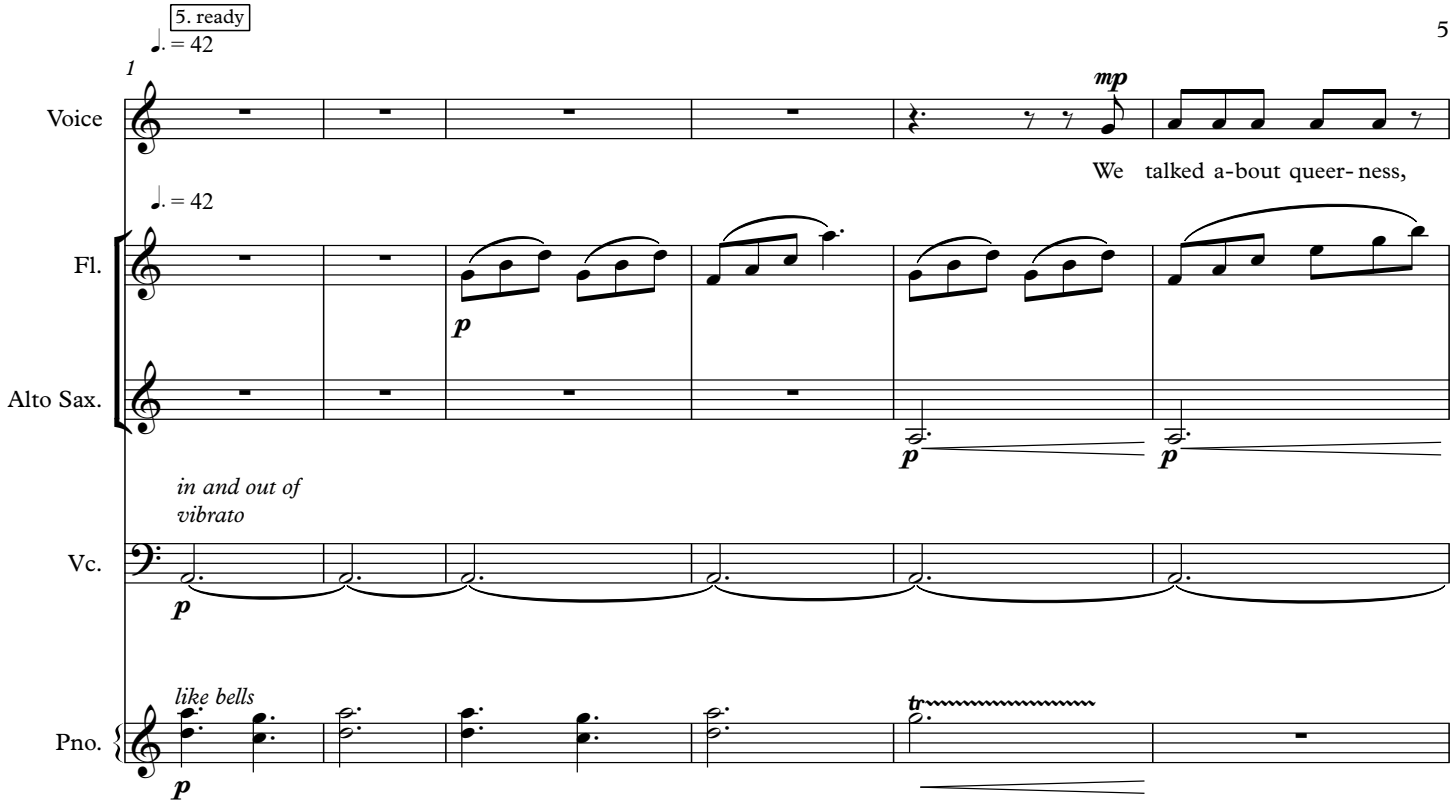
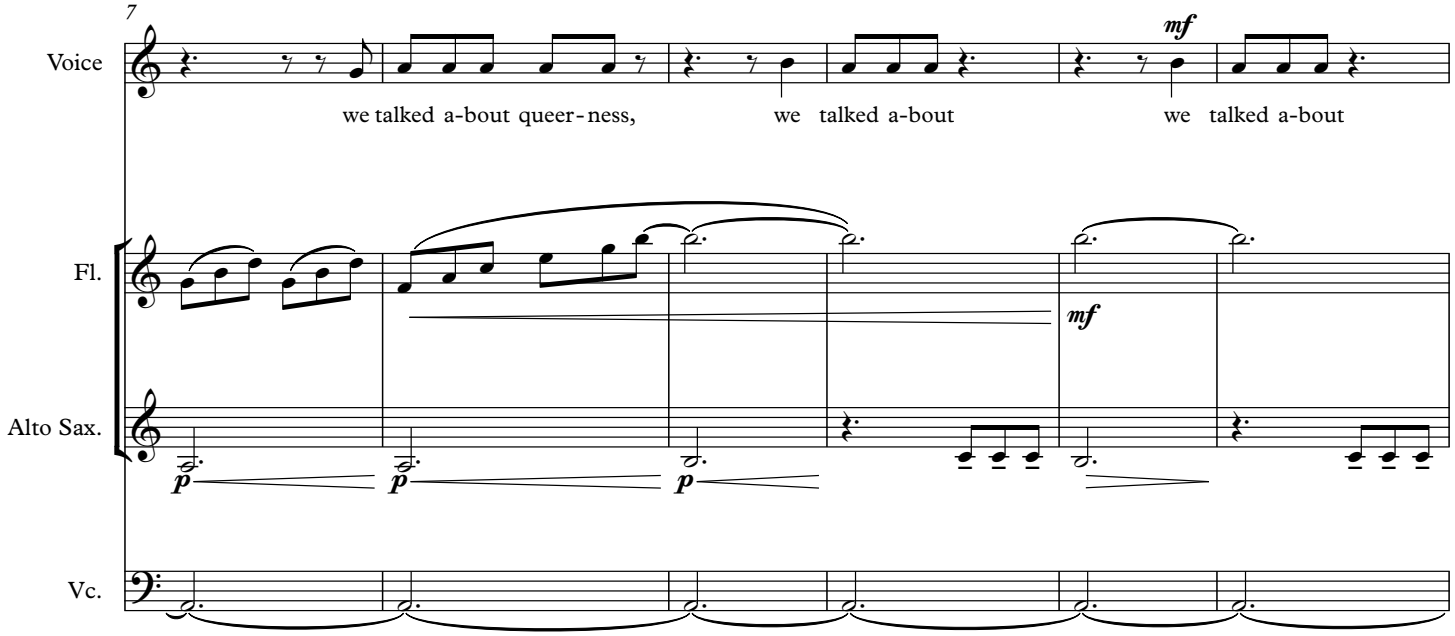

2. strophe
slowly, at your own pace
1
mp
Voice
Mm
Ah
improvise slowly on these pitches
Fl.
mp
take lengthy breathes as needed
Alto Sax.
mp
improvise harmonics at a fairly slow pace
Vc.
mf
improvise plucking both these strings
Pno.
mf
3
Voice
I ne-ver-real ly like–
I ne ver-real ly like–
I ne ver-real ly like–
stroph-ic mu-sic a - ny- way.
a bit faster
somewhat with the singer
Fl.
Alto Sax.
Vc.
Pno.

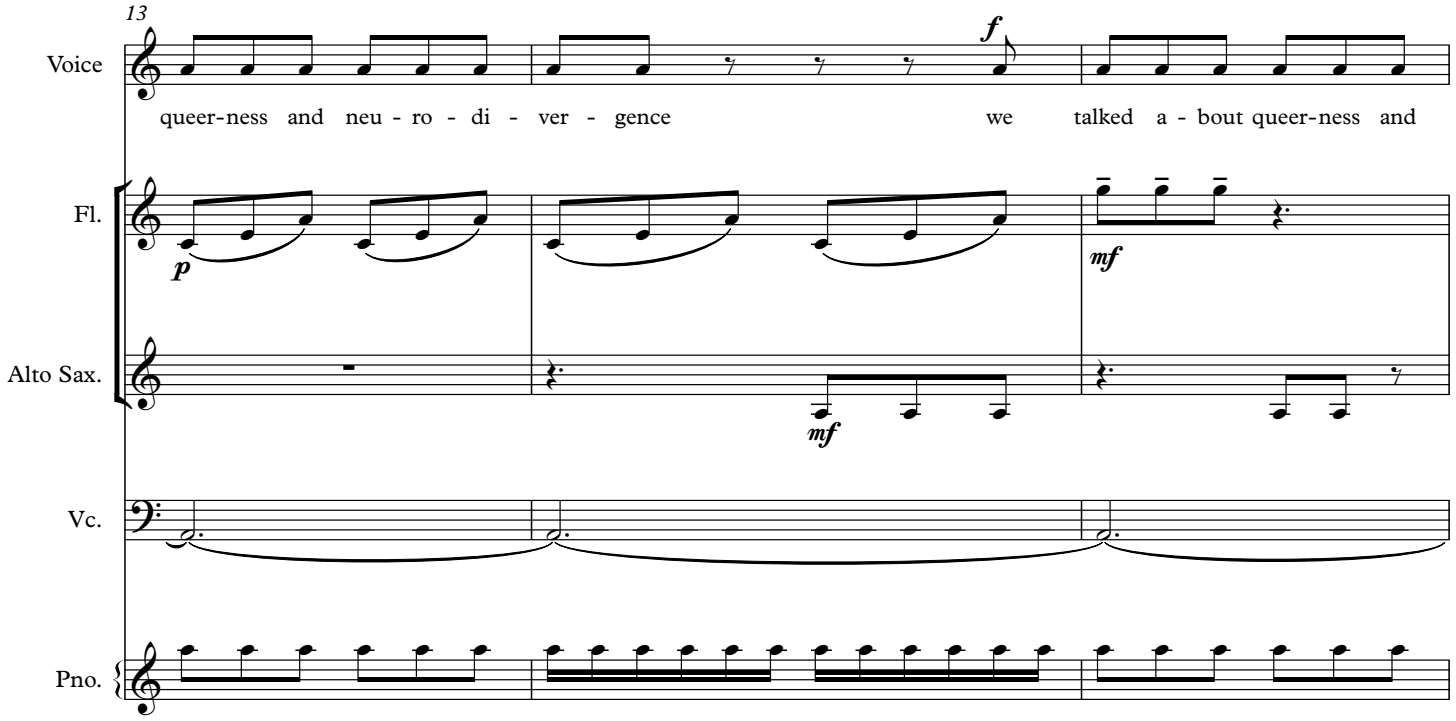

3. them
1
♩ = 60
Voice
f
they were
♩ = 60
cantabile
Vc.
mf
f
7
Voice
they were a nec - es - sa - ry peace - ful - ness.
Mm
3
Fl.
p
Vc.
mp
p
Pno.
mp

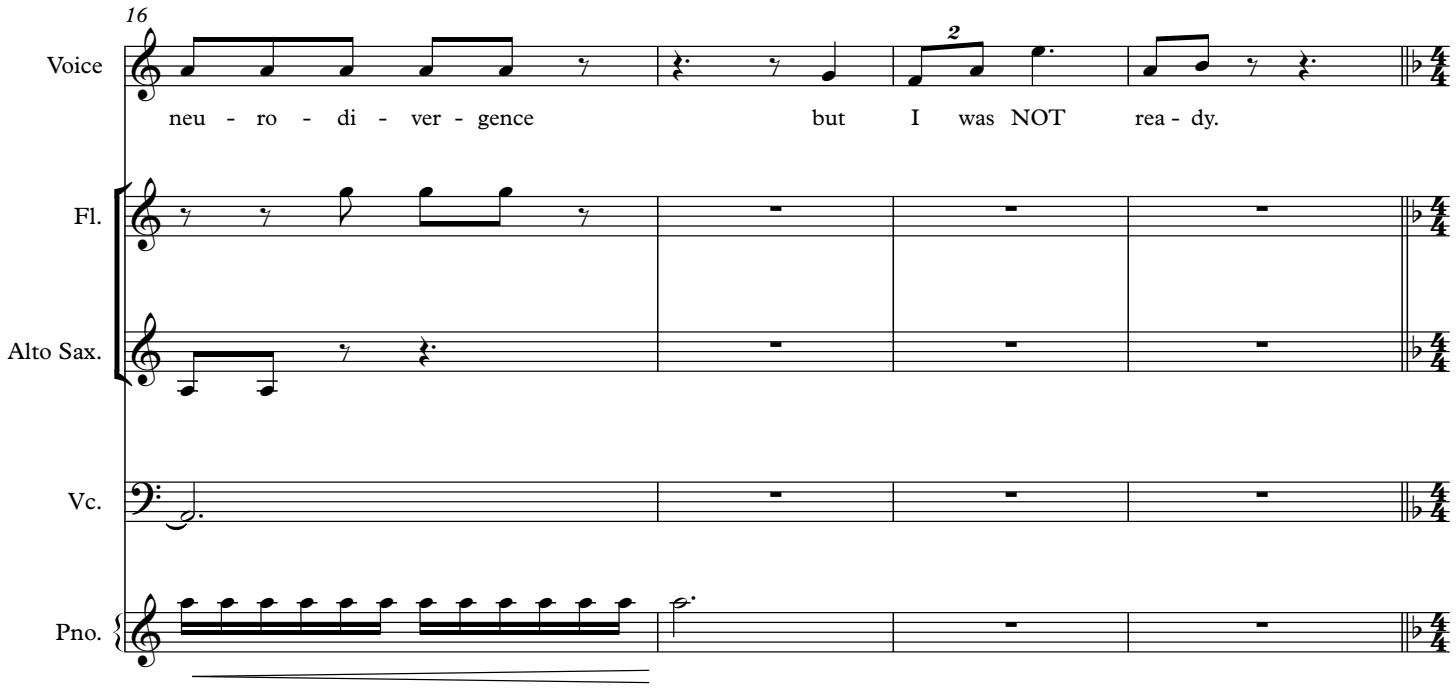

4. catharsis
1
♩. = 72
Spoken, hysterical:
calling people
is quite scary
Spoken, hysterical:
calling people
is quite scary
Voice
Fl.
Alto Sax.
Vc.
Pno.


5
Spoken, calmer:
calling people
is quite scary
Spoken, calmly:
catharsis
Voice
but what if I did for ne - ces - sa - ry
overblow
ord.
Fl.
Alto Sax.
Vc.
Pno.


5. ready
♩. = 42
1
Voice
mp
We talked a-bout queer- ness,
♩. = 42
Fl.
p
Alto Sax.
p
p
in and out of vibrato
Vc.
p
like bells
Pno.
tr
p


7
Voice
mf
we talked a-bout queer- ness,
we talked a-bout
we talked a-bout
Fl.
mf
Alto Sax.
p
p
p
Vc.


13
Voice
queer-ness and neu - ro - di - ver - gence we talked a - bout queer-ness and
Fl.
Alto Sax.
Vc.
Pno.


16
Voice
neu - ro - di - ver - gence but I was NOT rea - dy.
Fl.
Alto Sax.
Vc.
Pno.

6. hate

1

♩ = 112

Voice

f

I think may - be, may - be,

♩ = 112

Alto Sax.

f

Vc.

f

Pno.

f

8

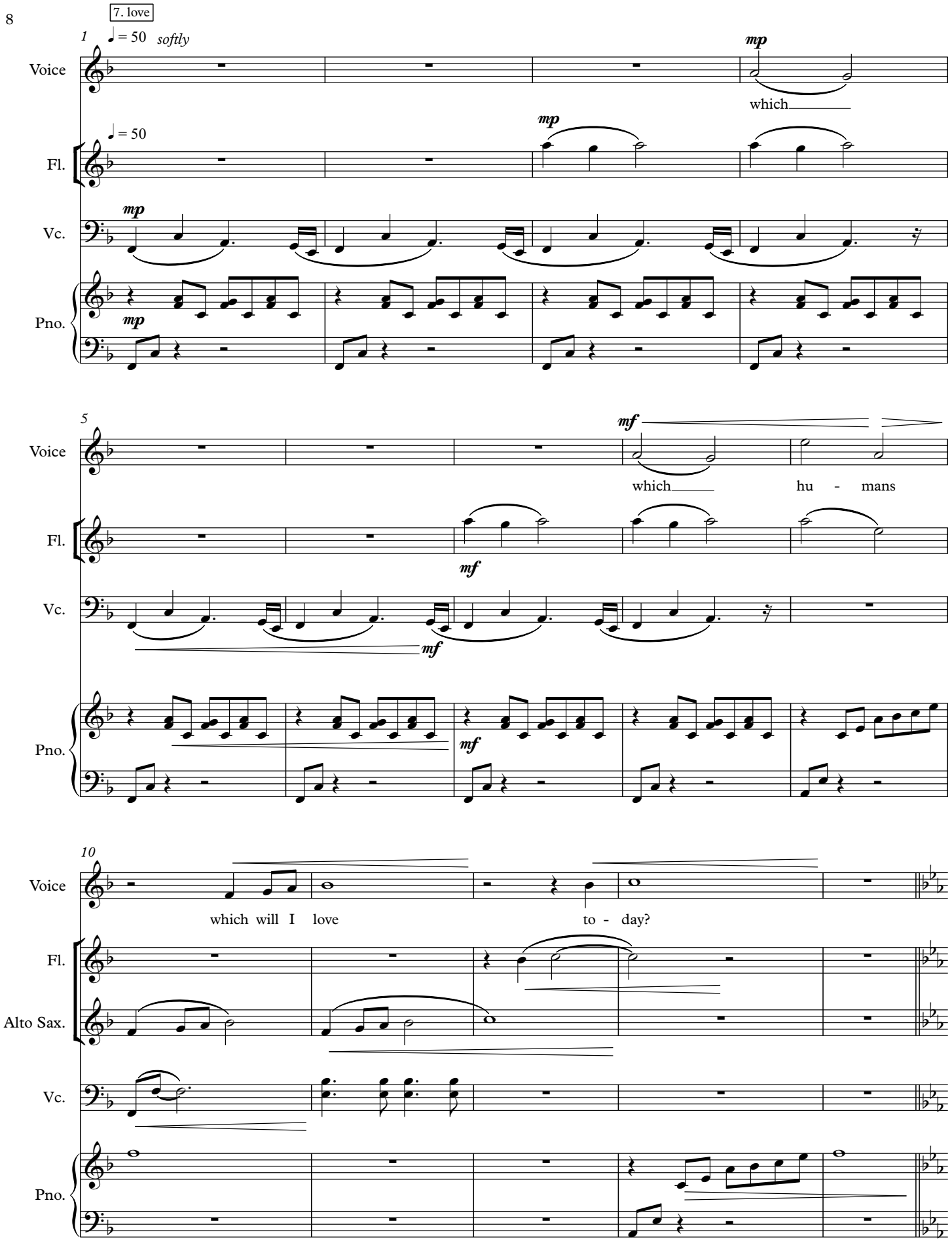
Voice

may - be she hates me.

Alto Sax.

Vc.

Pno.


7. love
1
♩ = 50 softly
Voice
Fl.
Vc.
Pno.
mp
which
5
mf
which hu - mans
10
which will I love
to - day?
Alto Sax.

8. okay

1

♩ = 76

Spoken, calmly: tomorrow

Spoken, calmly: tomorrow

Voice

Fl.

Alto Sax.

Vc.

Pno.

like bells

mp

p

7

Spoken: tomorrow will maybe be okay

Mm