ICE SONG: FANTASY ON AN INUIT POEM

by

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for

Soprano and Percussion

ICE SONG

I had been reading about the Inuit, shamanism among the Inuit and the powerful social commentary ESKIMOS, CHCANOS, INDIANS, VOLUME IV OF CHILDREN IN CRISIS by Robert Coles as I thought about writing a piece for singer Isabelle Ganz to perform at the MusicAlaskaWomen Festival in 1992. However, it was the specific poem below from an anthology of poetry by Jerome Rothenberg[1] which immediately ignited the piece. I often think about the woman described below and offer this piece in her honor.

HUNGER (excerpt) by Samik

Once during the winter famine
a woman gave birth to a child
while people lay round about her dying of hunger.
What could the baby want with life here on earth?
And how could it live when its mother herself
was dried up with starvation?
So she strangled it and let it freeze.
And later on ate it to keep alive -
Then a seal was caught and the famine was over,
so the mother survived.
But from that time on she was paralysed
because she had eaten a part of herself.

This is what can happen to people,
We have gone through it ourselves
And know what one may come to, so we do not judge them.
And how would anyone who has eaten his fill and is well
be able to understand the madness of hunger?
We only know that we all want so much to live!

---

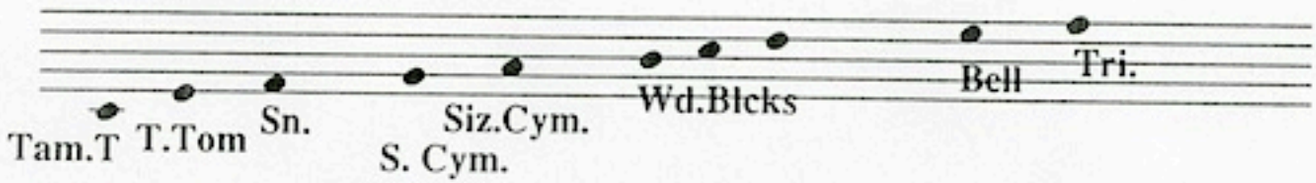
[1]Jerome Rothenberg, SHAKING THE PUMPKIN:Traditional Poetry of the Indian North Americas, University of New Mexico Press, 1986.

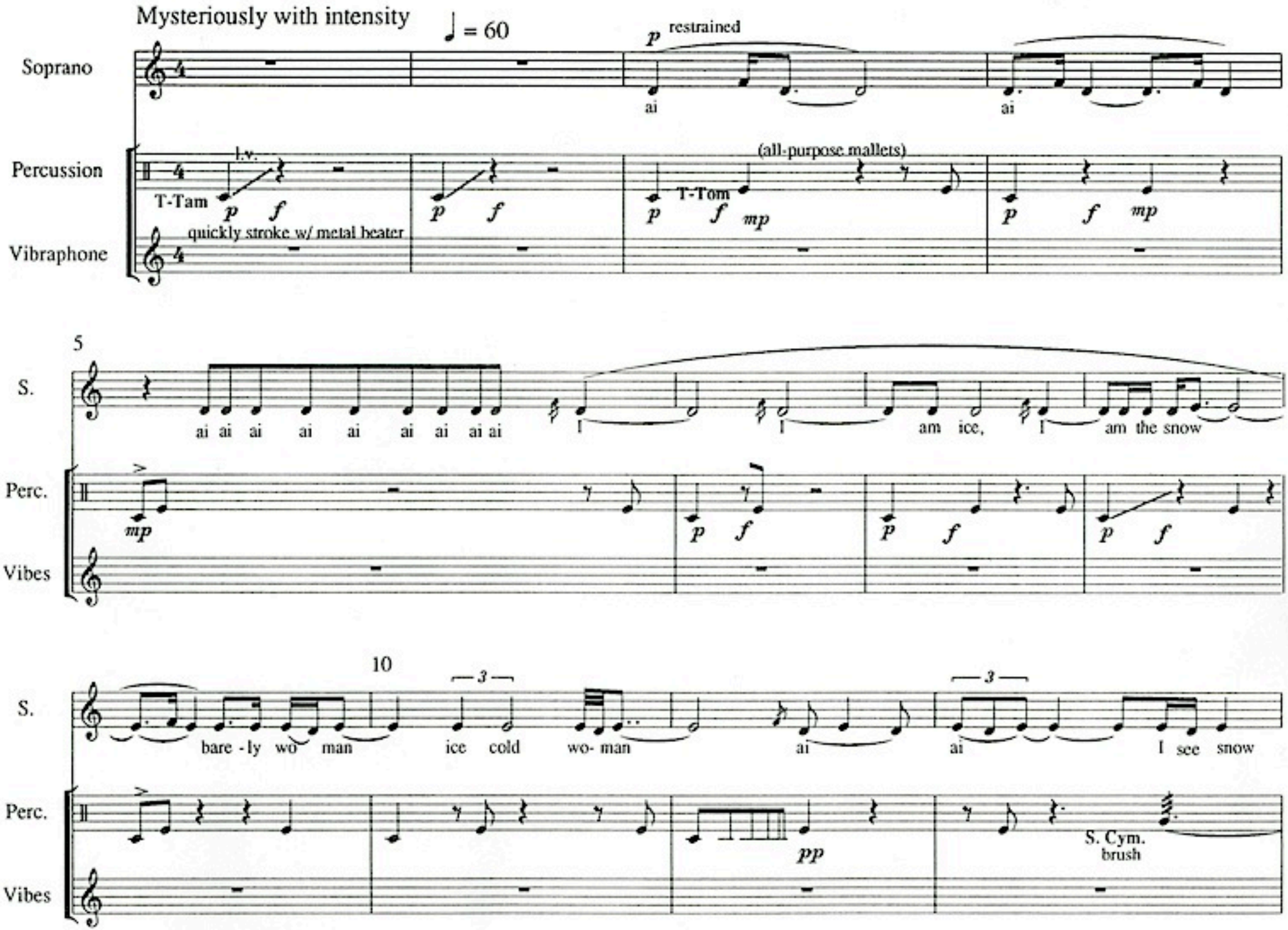
ICE SONG

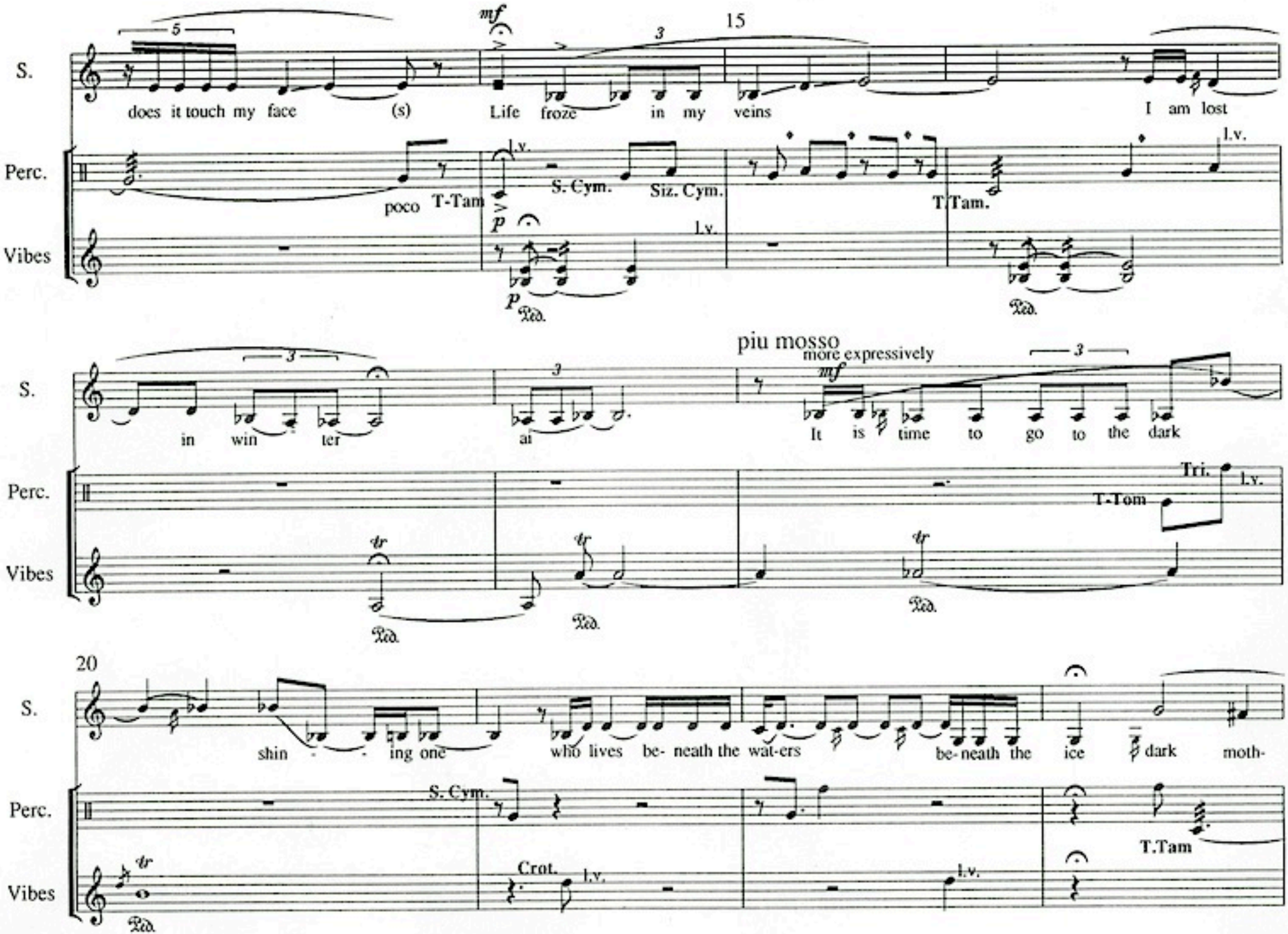
NOTES

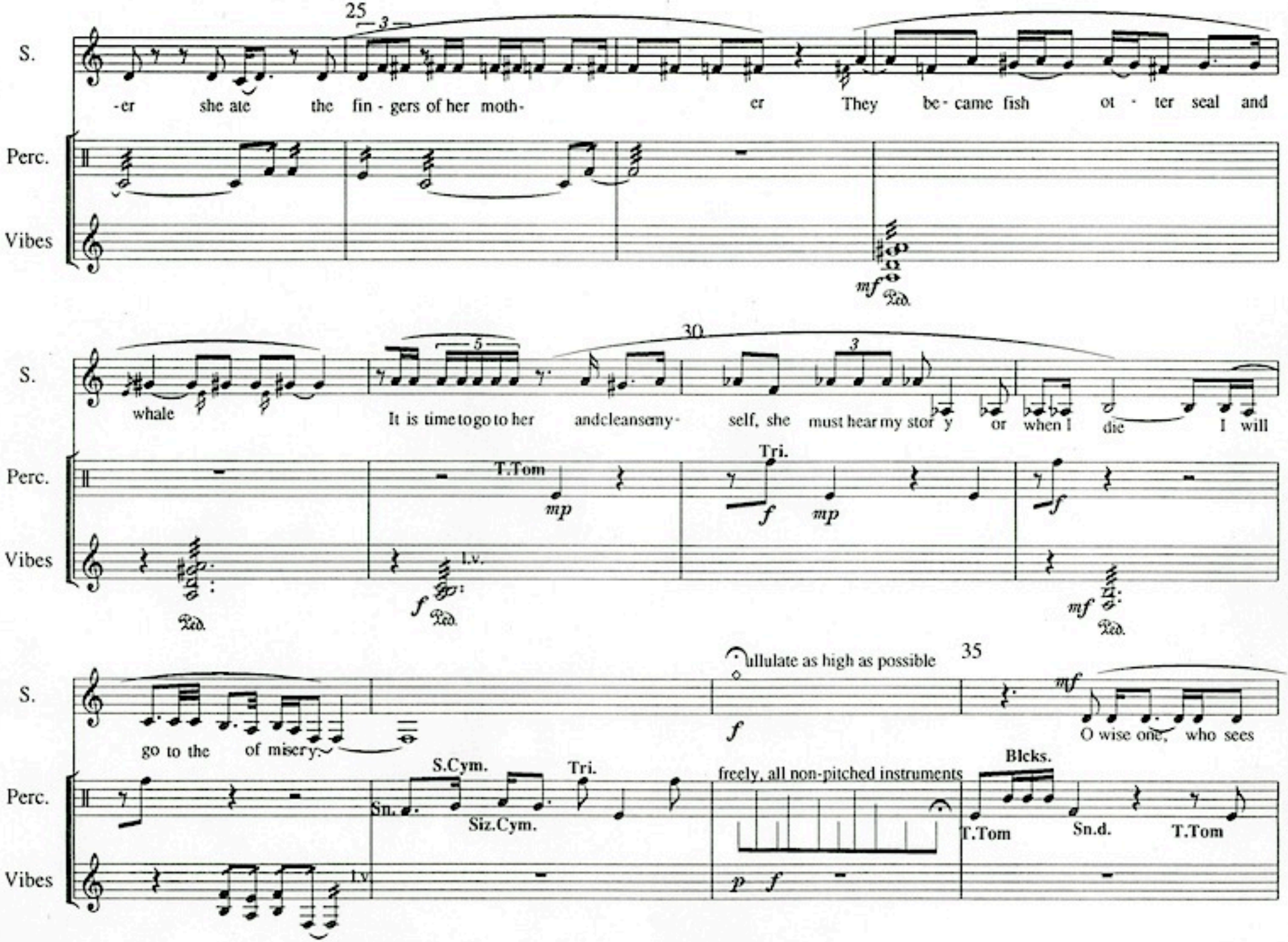
PERCUSSION INSTRUMENTATION

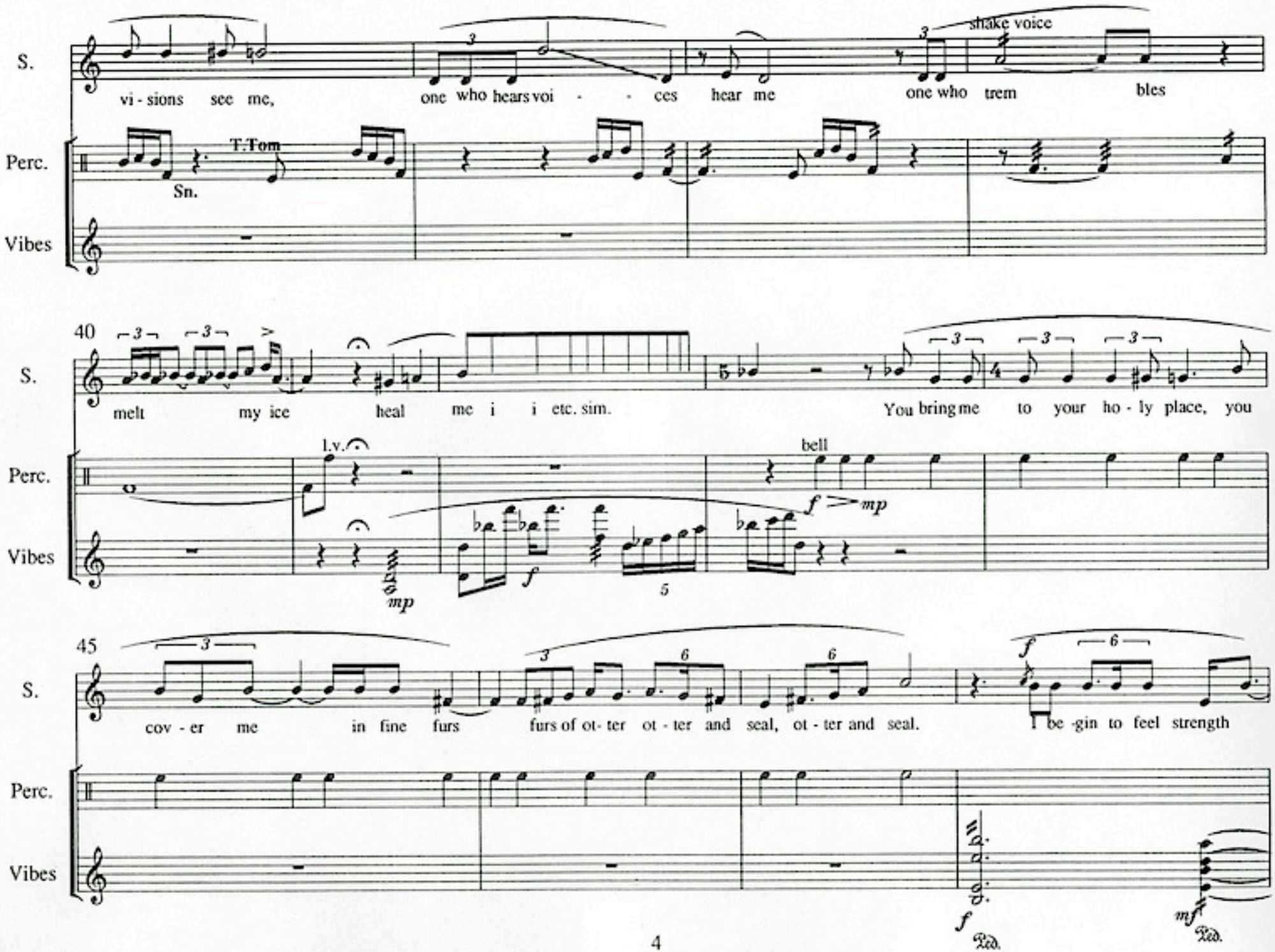
Triangle
Bell
Wood Blocks (3)
Small Cymbal
Sizzle Cymbal
Snare
Tom Tom
Tam Tam

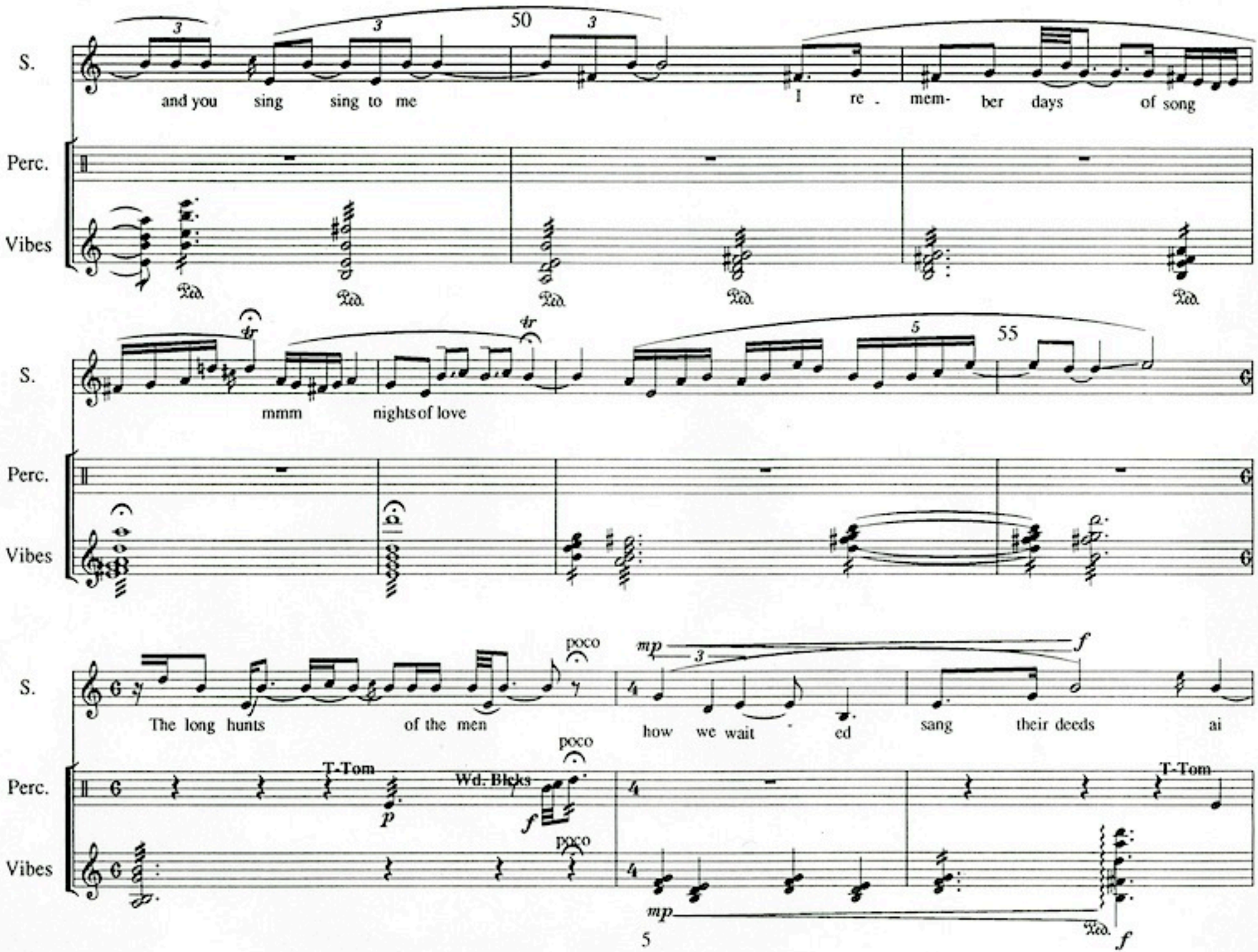


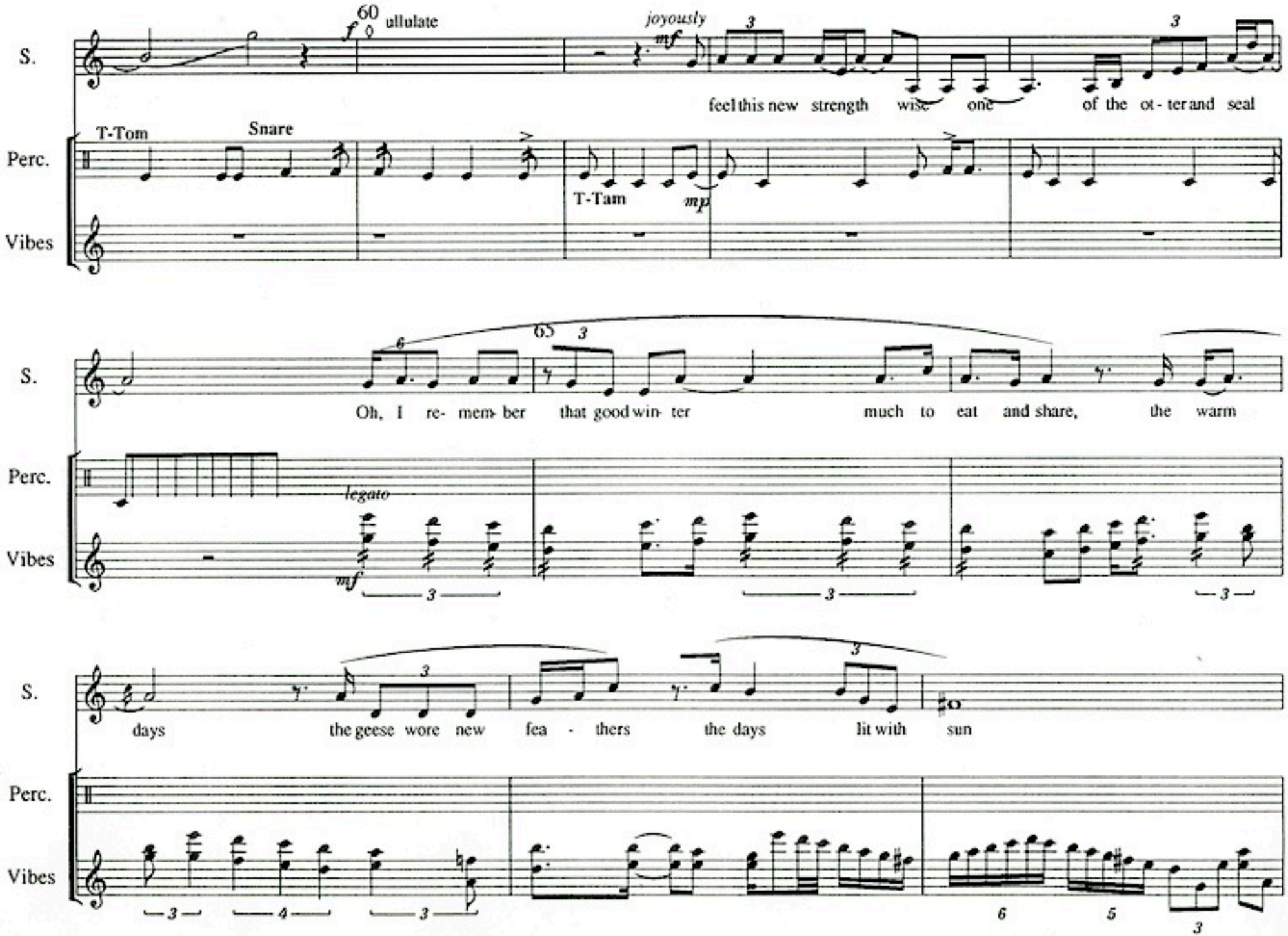

Mysteriously with intensity
♩ = 60
Soprano
p restrained
ai
ai
Percussion
Vibraphone
l.v.
T-Tam
p f
quickly stroke w/ metal beater
p f
(all-purpose mallets)
T-Tom
p f mp
p f mp
5
S.
ai ai ai ai ai ai ai ai ai
I
I
am ice,
I
am the snow
Perc.
Vibes
mp
p f
p f
p f
10
S.
bare - ly wo man
ice cold
wo- man
ai
ai
I see snow
3
3
Perc.
Vibes
pp
S. Cym.
brush

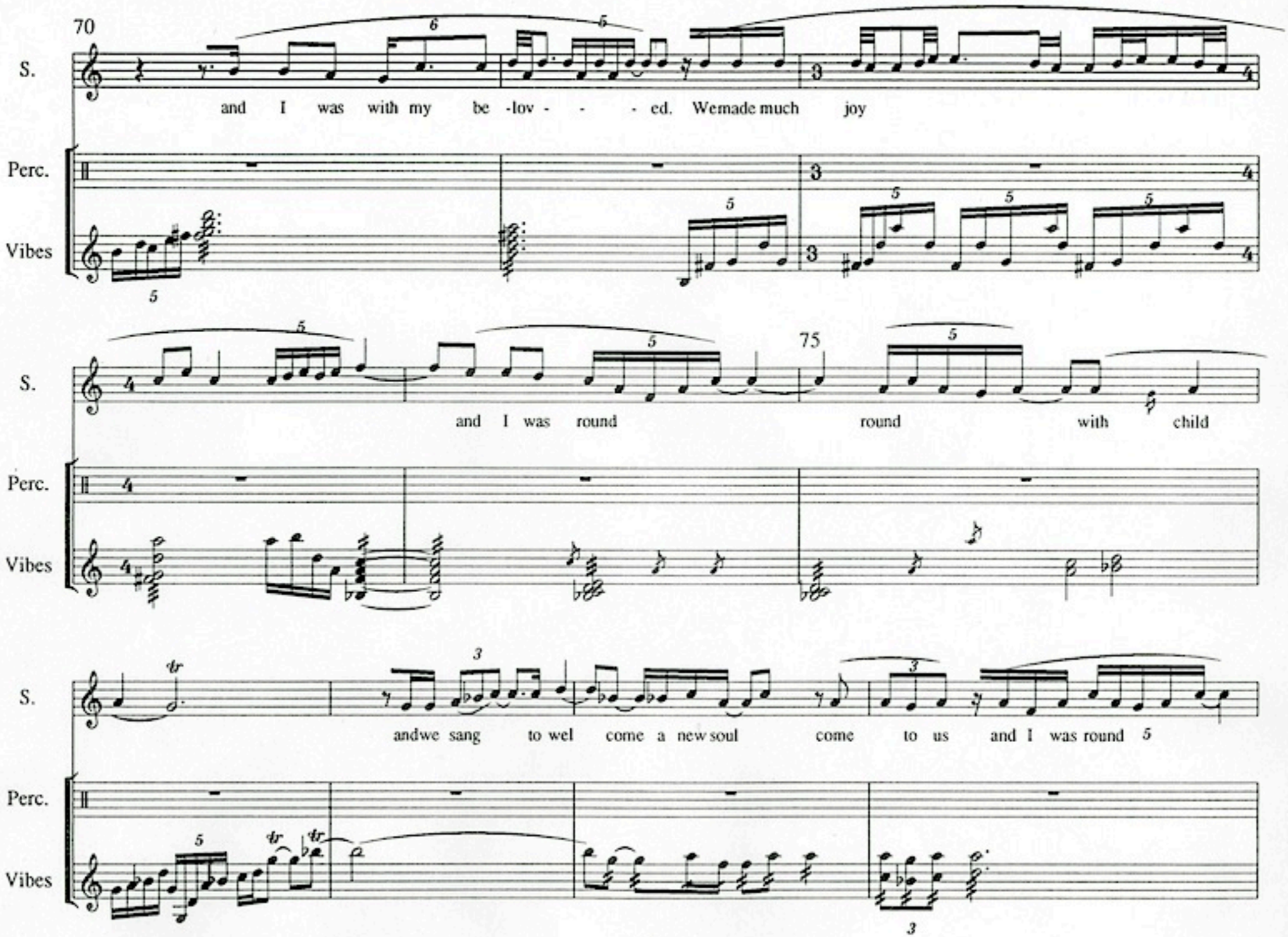

15
S.
Perc.
Vibes
does it touch my face
(s)
Life froze in my veins
I am lost
poco T-Tam
S. Cym.
Siz. Cym.
T.Tam.
l.v.
piu mosso
more expressively
in win ter
ai
It is time to go to the dark
Tri.
T-Tom
20
shin ing one
who lives be- neath the wat-ers
be-neath the ice
dark moth-
Crot.
T.Tam

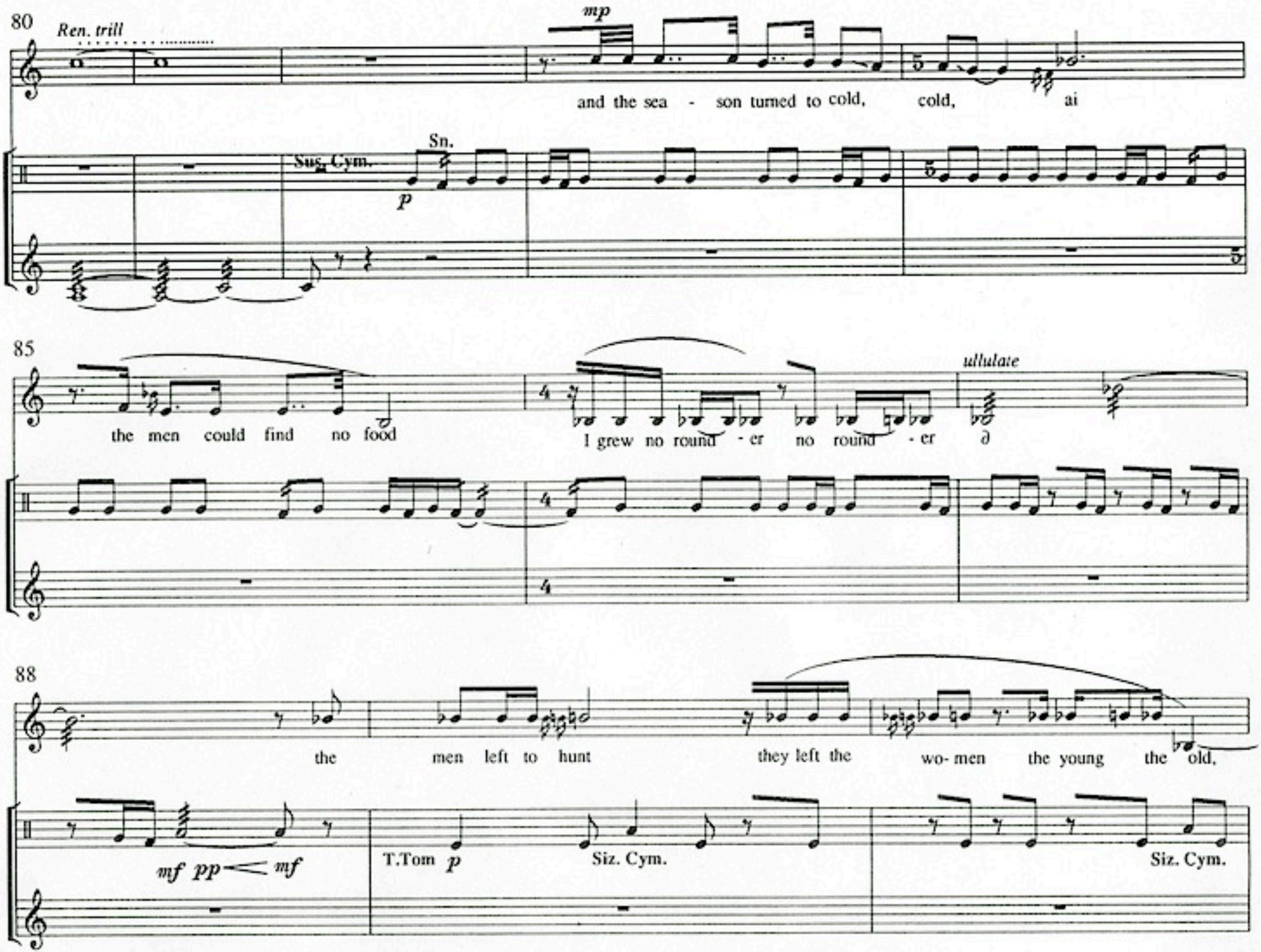

25
S.
-er she ate the fin - gers of her moth- er They be - came fish ot - ter seal and
Perc.
Vibes
mf
Ped.
30
S.
whale It is time to go to her and cleanse my - self, she must hear my sto r y or when I die I will
Perc.
T.Tom
mp
Tri.
f
mp
f
Vibes
l.v.
f
Ped.
mf
Ped.
35
S.
ullulate as high as possible
f
mf
go to the of misery; O wise one, who sees
Perc.
S.Cym.
Tri.
Sn.
Siz.Cym.
freely, all non-pitched instruments
Blcks.
T.Tom
Sn.d.
T.Tom
Vibes
l.v.
p
f

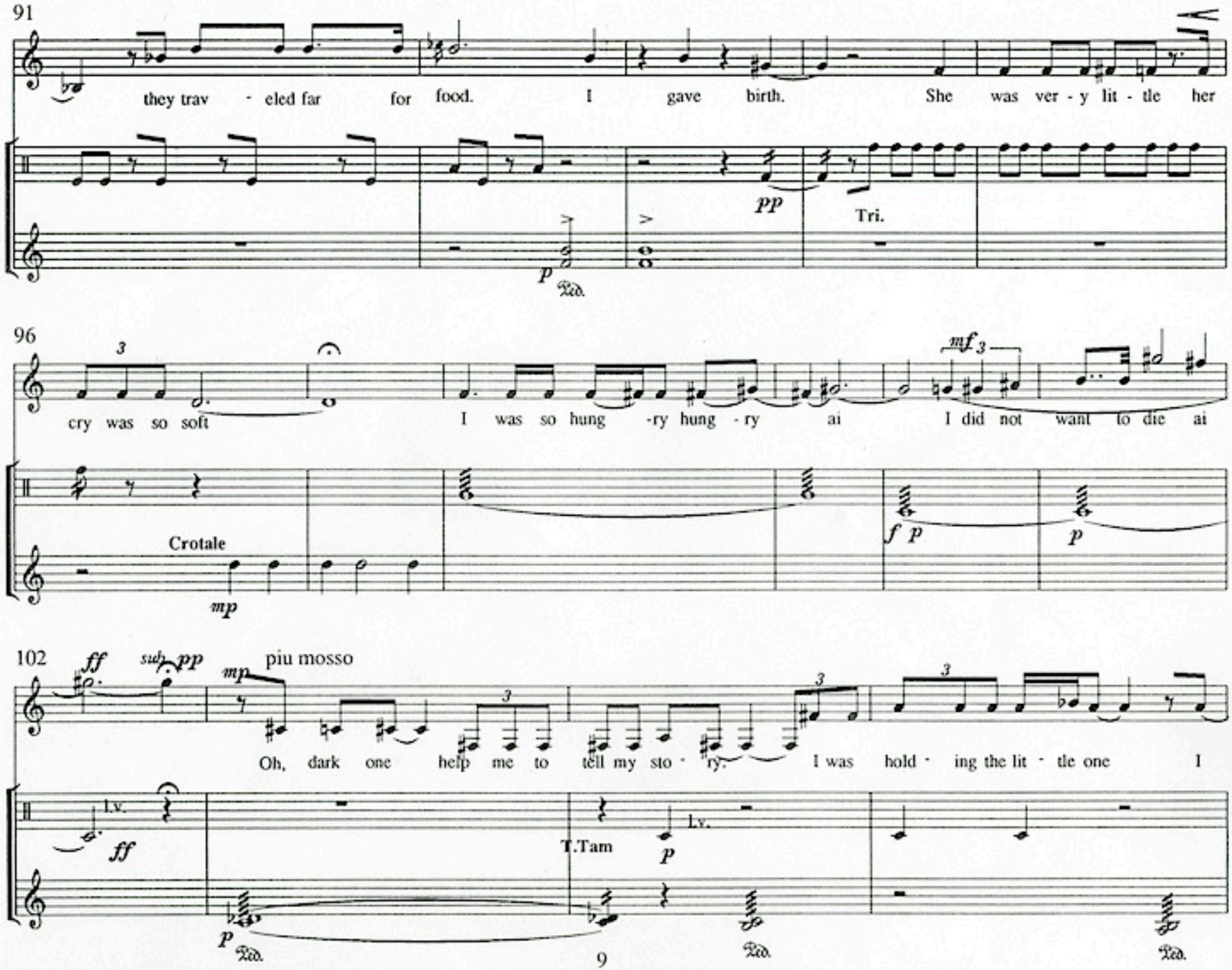

S.
Perc.
Vibes
vi - sions see me,
one who hears voi - - ces hear me
one who trem bles
shake voice
T.Tom
Sn.
40
melt my ice heal me i i etc. sim.
You bring me to your ho - ly place, you
l.v.
mp
f
bell
f mp
45
cov - er me in fine furs
furs of ot- ter ot - ter and seal, ot - ter and seal.
I be -gin to feel strength
f
mf
Ped.
Ped.

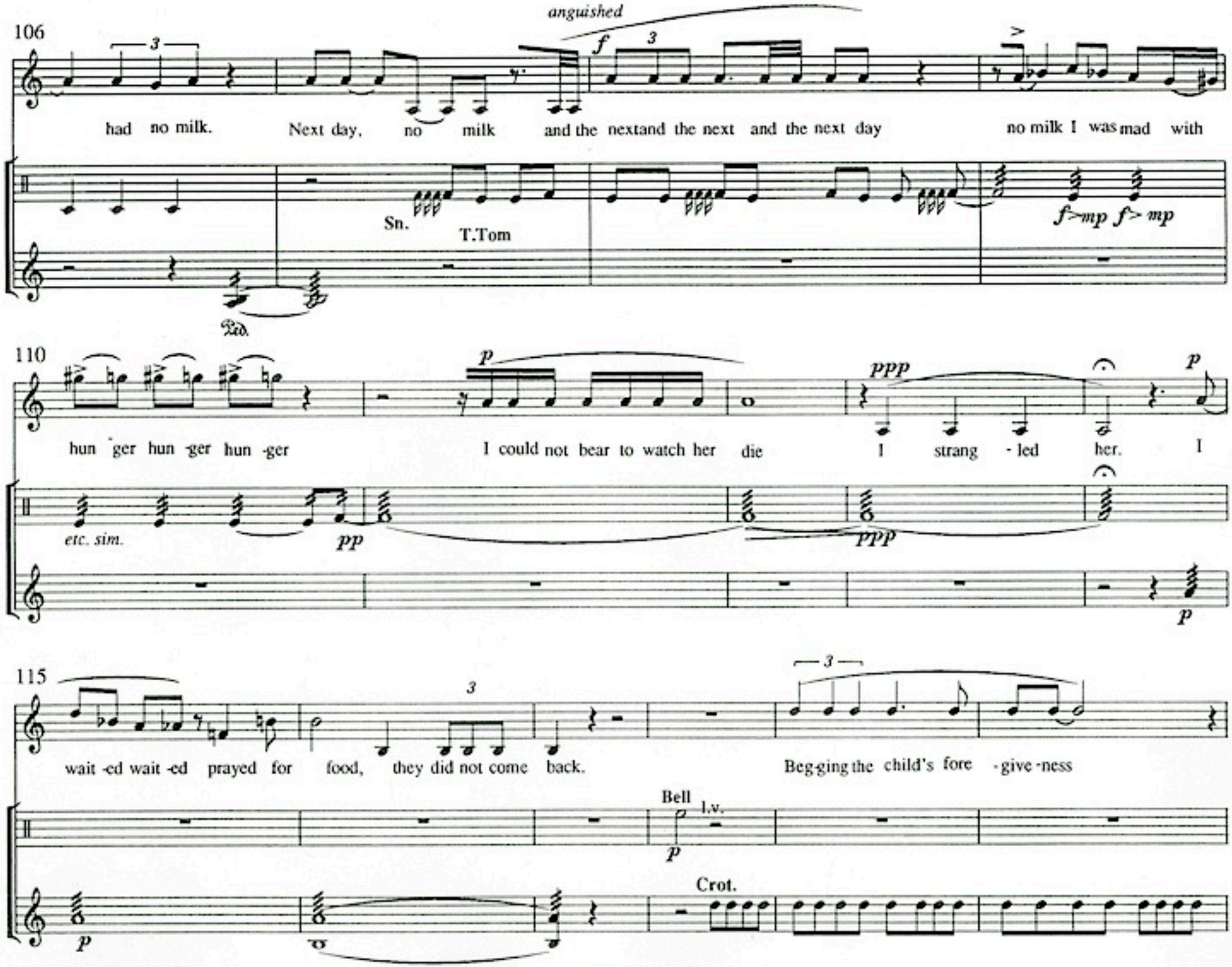

S.
and you sing sing to me
I re - mem- ber days of song
Perc.
Vibes
mmm nights of love
The long hunts of the men
how we wait - ed sang their deeds ai
T-Tom
Wd. Blcks
poco
mp
f
p

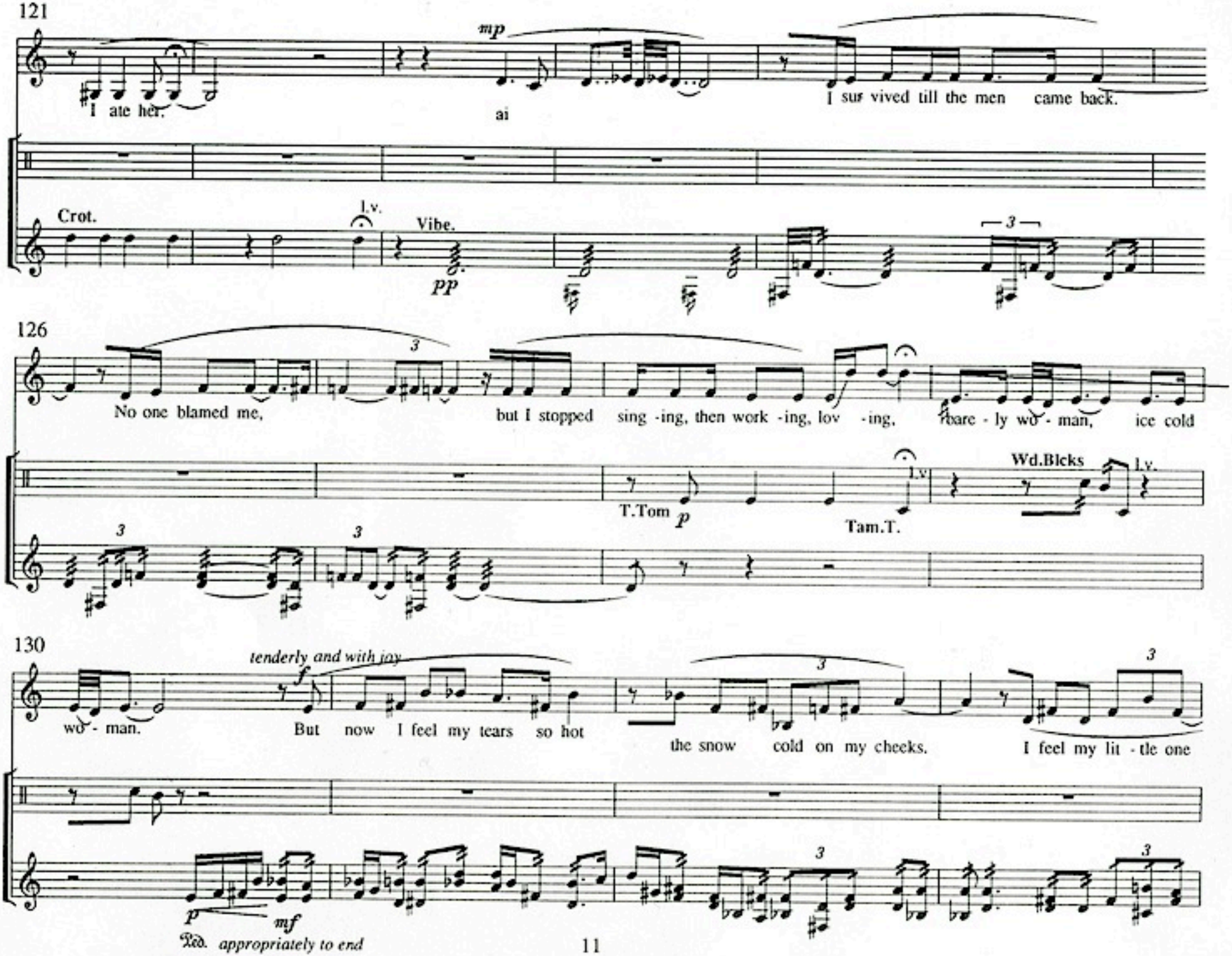

60
f
ullulate
joyously
mf
3
feel this new strength wise one of the ot - ter and seal
T-Tom
Snare
T-Tam
mp
S.
Perc.
Vibes
65
6
Oh, I re- mem- ber that good win- ter much to eat and share, the warm
legato
mf
days the geese wore new fea - thers the days lit with sun

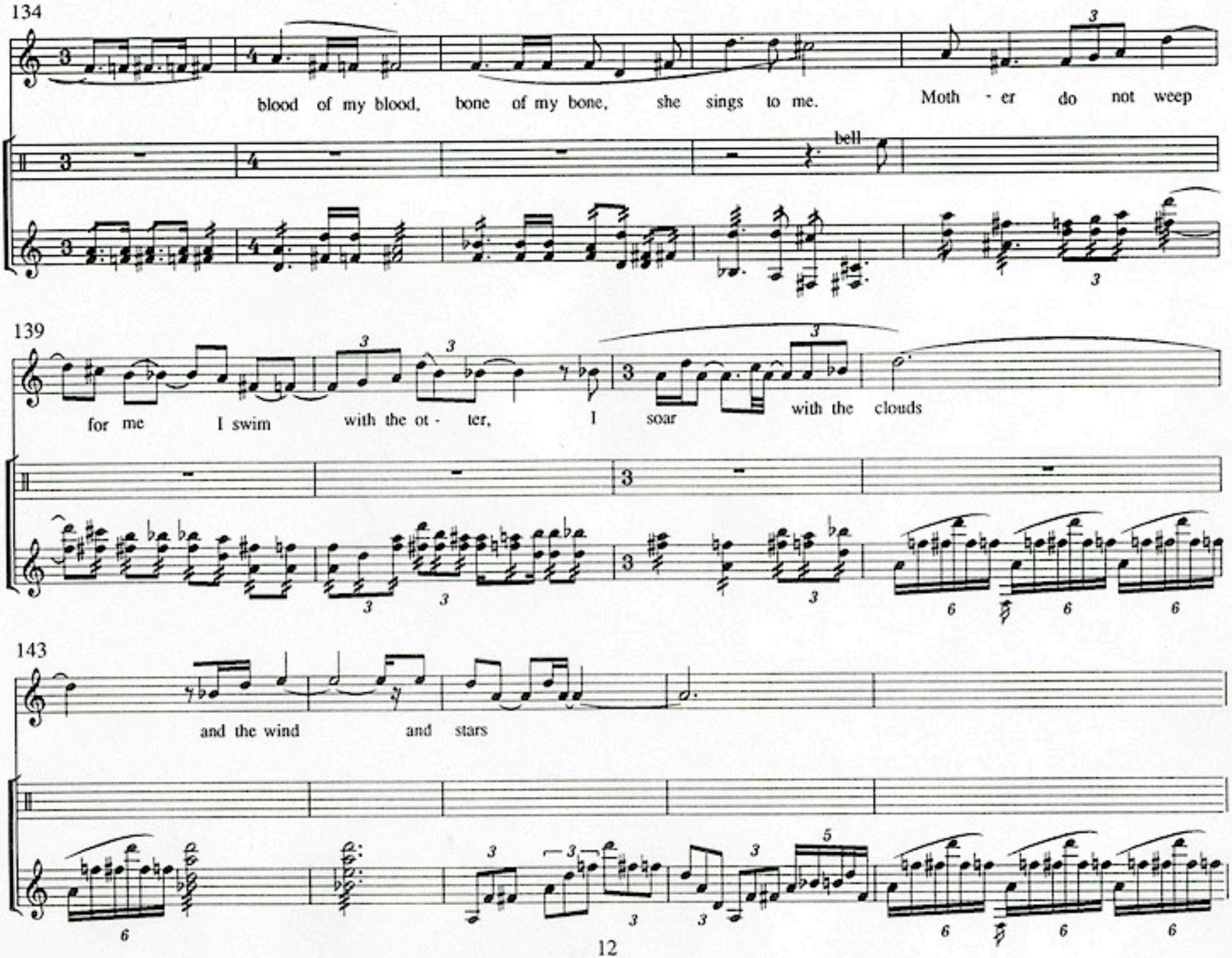

70
S.
and I was with my be -lov - - - - ed. We made much joy
Perc.
Vibes
S.
and I was round round with child
Perc.
Vibes
S.
and we sang to wel come a new soul come to us and I was round
Perc.
Vibes

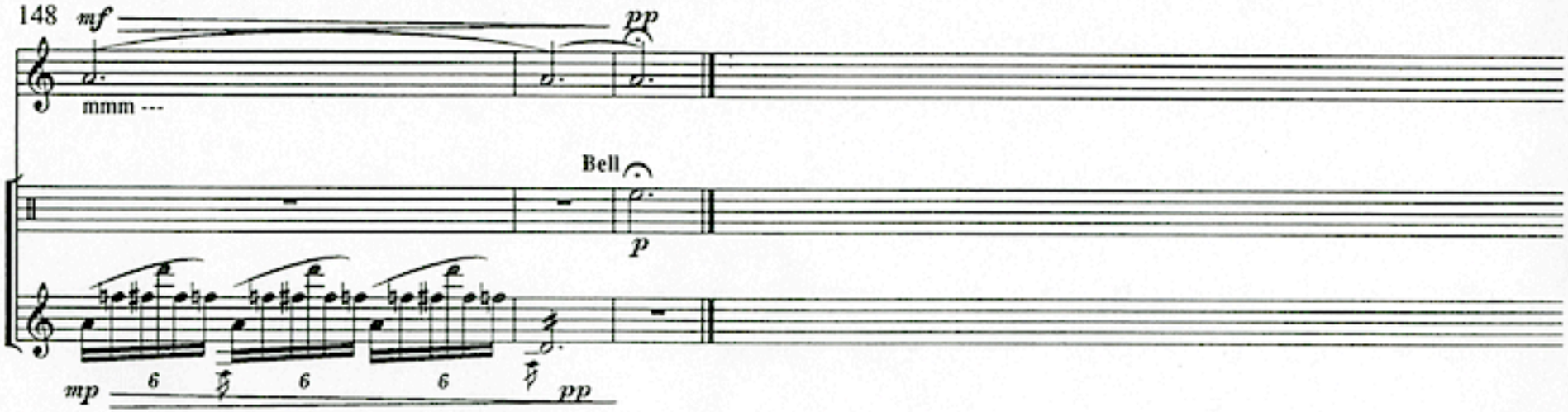

80
Ren. trill
mp
and the sea - son turned to cold, cold, ai
Sn.
Sus. Cym.
p
85
the men could find no food
I grew no round - er no round - er
ullulate
88
the men left to hunt they left the wo- men the young the old,
mf pp mf
T.Tom p
Siz. Cym.
Siz. Cym.


91
they trav - eled far for food. I gave birth. She was ver - y lit - tle her
pp
Tri.
p
Ped.
96
3
cry was so soft
I was so hung -ry hung - ry ai
I did not want to die ai
mf 3
Crotale
mp
f p
p
102
ff
sub. pp
piu mosso
mp
3
Oh, dark one help me to tell my sto - ry.
I was hold - ing the lit - tle one I
l.v.
ff
T.Tam
p
l.v.
p
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.


106
anguished
had no milk. Next day, no milk and the nextand the next and the next day no milk I was mad with
Sn.
T.Tom
Ped.
110
hun ger hun ger hun ger I could not bear to watch her die I strang - led her. I
etc. sim.
115
wait -ed wait -ed prayed for food, they did not come back. Beg-ging the child's fore - give - ness
Bell
l.v.
Crot.


121
mp
I ate her.
ai
I sur vived till the men came back.
Crot.
l.v.
Vibe.
PP
126
No one blamed me,
but I stopped sing -ing, then work -ing, lov -ing,
bare - ly wo - man, ice cold
T.Tom
p
Tam.T.
Wd.Blcks
l.v.
130
tenderly and with joy
f
wo - man.
But now I feel my tears so hot
the snow cold on my cheeks.
I feel my lit - tle one
p
mf
Ped. appropriately to end


134
blood of my blood, bone of my bone, she sings to me. Moth - er do not weep
bell
139
for me I swim with the ot - ter, I soar with the clouds
143
and the wind and stars


148
mf
pp
mmm ---
Bell
p
mp
6
6
6
pp