

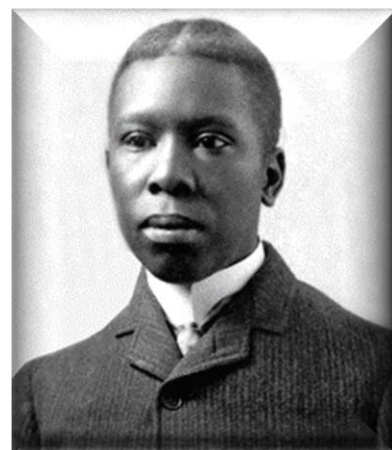
SEVEN SONGS

on Texts of African American Poets

by Florence B. Price

transposed for high voice

Poems by
Florence B. Price
Melvin B. Tolson Paul Laurence Dunbar
Langston Hughes



Edited by John Michael Cooper
First Publication

ClarNan Editions

For BARBARA WRIGHT-PRYOR:
mezzo-contralto,
President, Chicago Music Association (1996-2017), Branch No. 1, NANM, Inc.
– For the Love of Music

Florence B. Price
Seven Songs on Texts of African American Poets
(transposed for high voice)

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FOREWORD

This volume's appearance is part of a widespread increase in scholarly and public awareness of the music of Florence B. Price (1887 or 1888-1953) – the most powerful and sustained musical renaissance since the nineteenth-century Bach revival or the twentieth-century resurgences of interest in Gustav Mahler, Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel, and Clara Wieck Schumann. The Price movement encompasses general studies of her life and work, a strong impetus toward inclusion of her name and music in education (so that tomorrow's teachers will teach their own students about Price as part of the world's musical landscape), and new editions and performances of her symphonies, concertos, choral and piano works, and spirituals.

And it includes her art songs – the genre that is home to some of Price's best-known and widely studied compositions, including her settings of Langston Hughes's "Songs to the Dark Virgin" (from the *Four Songs from "The Weary Blues"*), *Bewilderment*, and *Feet o' Jesus*, Paul Laurence Dunbar's *Sympathy* and *What's the Use*, Fannie Carter Woods's *Out of the South Blew a Wind*, Georgia Douglas Johnson's *The Heart of a Woman*, and Louise C. Wallace's *Night*. In all these songs and others, Price shows herself not only to be a superb melodist and harmonist and a composer with a profound understanding of the human voice, but also an astute and sensitive reader of poetry who translated her poets' images, ideas, and messages into music that also communicates her own highly personalized readings of those texts.

The songs in the present volume, all on texts of African American poets, corroborate that portrait. Composed between ca. 1932 and 1947, they span the bulk of Price's active composing career (1925-1953) and offer a wide range of styles – from the almost operatic drama of *Brown Arms (To Mother)*, through the Black-vernacular-influenced idioms of the first three Dunbar settings and the pointed wit and theatricality of *Goo'-bye Jinks*, to the achingly beautiful maternal tenderness of Hughes's *Lullaby (For a Black Mother)* and the profoundly philosophical contemplations of *My Soul and I* (on a poem by Melvin B. Tolson).

The songs presented here were also selected for their significance. The first song, ***Brown Arms (To Mother)***, is important as perhaps Price's most obviously autobiographical and confessional composition in the domain of the art song – rivaled, perhaps, only by the late (ca. 1950) song *To My Little Son*.¹ Although the undated holograph of *Brown Arms (To Mother)* anonymized the poet and composer, stating that the words are by "a Colored Poet" and the music is by "OAK LEAF," the upper left-hand corner of the first page also bears the autograph inscription "Class I," and in the upper right-hand corner is written in a foreign hand "103" – all indications that the song was submitted to a competition. Because the manuscript's handwriting is identical to that of the autographs for the G-minor *Fantasie nègre* and the earliest complete version of the B-minor *Fantasie nègre* and the latter won honorable mention in the 1932 Rodman Wanamaker Competition for Composers of the Negro Race, that was probably the competition in question – and that date is significant, for the year 1932 was the twentieth anniversary of the year in which Florence Price's mother, Florence Irene Gulliver Smith, cut all strings with Price and moved away to spend the rest of her life passing as White. If we surmise that Price herself was the "colored poet" who authored the words of *Brown Arms (To Mother)*, then this song, with its complaints of the cities' "huddled houses" and "the selfish hearts of men" and its poignant envoicings of a daughter's desire for the warm embrace of a mother's "brown

¹ Although *To My Little Son* is widely said to date from shortly after the death of Price's son Tommy (1914-20), its musical style and the handwriting of the only surviving autograph place it in Price's final years – probably not long before its performance in Knoxville, Tennessee, on 2 November 1950.

arms,” emerges as Florence Price’s own musical cry for the mother whom she had not seen in twenty years.

Of equally obvious significance are the settings of poetry by Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872-1906) included in this volume under Price’s title ***Four Negro Songs***. Although Price’s Dunbar settings such as *Sympathy* and *My Neighbor* are well known already, they are written in standard English, not dialect. Yet Dunbar’s historical significance rests not least on his genius for revealing the poetry of Black life in Black dialect unsullied by the formalities of White language. Because the *Four Negro Songs* are Price’s own engagement with that facet of his genius – in Dunbar’s view, a particular poetic genre rather than merely an inflection of standard ones² – and Black life generally, they are important as her own direct engagement, in song, with the same facets of Black existence that make Dunbar’s poetry significant.

The manuscripts and compositional history of the *Four Negro Songs* show that the set is a carefully ordered song cycle. Dunbar drew no connections between the texts,³ but the surviving musical autographs show that Price composed Dunbar’s *The Photograph* and *The Delinquent* on 20 March 1935 and *The Easy-Goin’ Feller* and *The Summer Night* the following day, retitling these “Dat’s My Gal, or The Photograph,” “Goo’-bye, Jinks,” “Easy-Goin’,” and “Summah Night” (which song was composed first of each pair is unclear). At some point later on, then, she placed the songs written on 21 March before those of 20 March and grouped the four into the sequence presented here. She then copied that manuscript out, had the copy bound, typed a title etiquette for it, and sent it to the great contralto Marian Anderson, a friend and collaborator. But she also made a new copy of this manuscript for her own home reference and use. The importance (in Price’s view) of the songs’ being performed continuously and in this order is reinforced by the fact that the manuscript is presented as a single whole, with continuous pagination throughout each volume.

Those circumstances in turn offer insights material to interpretation and performance, for they suggest that Price considered the whole to be a cycle, one that traces the progress of a relationship. In this view, the titular “Easy-Goin’ Feller” of No. 1 is central lyric persona (the “I”) of the entire cycle, while the “Mirandy” of No. 4 is the “little dove” whom he seduces on a beautiful “Summah Night” in No. 2 and the “gal” who says that he is “huh beau” in No. 3. The songs thus progress from the “easy-goin’ feller’s” bachelorhood, through his courting of “Mirandy” and the young love of the relationship, to a later point where he spends his whole day (and his money) at a bar named Jinks, only to realize too late that his delinquent choices court the displeasure of “Mirandy.” When the mule (named Suke) finally brings him home, he finds her standing in the door of the cabin, clothes-stick in hand and looking “glum” – but finally, despite the “rar” (roar) he likely faces from his mate because of his irresponsible behavior, he hastens to her in the cycle’s closing bars. That both of the surviving autographs are inscribed “(To Edith)” beneath the title of No. 1 suggests that the cycle may be a commentary on a relationship between the composer’s younger daughter, Edith Cassandra Price (1921-63), and an unnamed “feller” (though it should be noted that because Edith Cassandra Price would not marry

² See especially Michael Cohen, “Paul Laurence Dunbar and the Genres of Dialect,” *African American Review* 41 (2007): 247-57.

³ Price’s source for the texts cannot be ascertained. *The Easy-Goin’ Feller* and *The Delinquent* were first published in Dunbar’s *Lyrics of Lowly Life* (1897), while *The Photograph* was first published in his *Lyrics of the Hearthside* (1904) and *The Summer Night* was first published in his *Lyrics of Sunshine and Shadow* (1905). Although Price may have known the poems through these original publications, it is also possible that she came to them through W. D. Howells, *The Complete Poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1915). In that volume *Easy-Goin’ Feller* is presented on p. 49), *A Summer Night* on pp. 262-63, *The Photograph* on pp. 144-45, and *The Delinquent* on pp. 64-65.

William Pennington Taylor until 1943, some eight years after these songs were composed, he probably was not the “easy-goin’” “delinquent” of Price’s cycle).

The significance of *Lullaby (For a Black Mother)* (1945) is of a more general, but still meaningful, sort, for in it Price uses Hughes’s words to revisit moments of Black motherhood that she may have experienced years earlier, while raising her daughters Florence Louise (1917-75) and Edith Cassandra (1921-63), who were eighteen and fifteen years old when she wrote this song. Whether Price knew Hughes’s poem from its original publication in the March, 1926 issue of *The Crisis* (p. 224) or its subsequent re-release in the collection *The Dream Keeper* (1932) is unclear; but she responded in a profoundly sensitive fashion – setting the first five lines of strophes 1 and 2 and the first two lines of strophe 3, in which the mother wonders what sort of sleep-song she should sing for her “little dark baby,” in a gently rocking duple meter, but the songs of the lullaby itself to contrasting, conspicuously blues-inflected, music in 6/8 time. The result is that Price’s *Lullaby* is really two songs in one: a song about a lullaby paired with a lullaby proper. Perhaps the most remarkable moment, however, occurs in mm. 64-66 – for here the gently rocking music abruptly stops, and then Price, over a mysterious augmented chord, *pianissimo*, musically tracks the mother’s gaze as she lifts her eyes from her child to the “great diamond moon, kissing the night” before closing with music derived from the lullaby proper.

The final song in this volume, *My Soul and I* (1947), is Florence Price’s only known musical contemplation of the sources of artistic inspiration. The text by Melvin B. Tolson – whose renown as poet and teacher who pioneered debates between the students of HBCUs and White colleges in the Jim Crow South and beyond was recently renewed in Denzel Washington’s 2007 film *The Great Debaters* – depicts the solitary artist, grounded on “the pearl-dust couch on the shore,” in contemplation of the vast and conflicting forces of nature. It is a study in contrasts – between earth, air, fire, and water; between plurals and the individual; between turbulence and calm, reality and dreams, stasis and endless motion; between the life of the soul and the lives of the sea. And it is a meditation on how the poet’s soul, paradoxically “balmed” by those conflicting forces, draws its dreams from them.

Florence Price, writing in 1947, combined her deep understanding of the expressive capacities of the human voice with the extraordinarily rich harmonic language for which her late compositions are justly known to give full or even amplified voice to that turbulence, those contrasts, and the balmed peace of the dreams that nourish the solitary artist’s soul. Most obviously, the glistening calm of the opening bars stands against the frenetic, dissonant turbulence of the sea gulls that “ski far down the crags of foam like arcs in flight” (mm. 23-25) and the “thick white pythons of tide” (mm. 30-33). More generally, the song’s tonal structure explores the conflicting duality of E major and C major, keys that share the pitches *E*, *A*, and *B* but otherwise have tellingly little in common. Even the poem’s motivating theme of seeming contradiction finds direct musical expression here, especially in m. 26, where the music’s forceful and dissonant chromaticism seems to belie the text it carries: “But we are balmed” (probably a musical portrayal of the determination it takes to will the soul into a balmed state in the face of the conflicting forces that surround the poet). Yet these detailed musical responses to the poem do not prevent Price from using her song to deliver Tolson’s larger message – for in the last section she uses the conflicting forces of G major and E-flat major (E major and C major in the original keys) to portray the liberating darkness of the night skies as it unlooses the poet’s inspiration, closing with a new and surpassingly beautiful calm born of the dreams that the conflicts of nature beget in the poet’s soul.

Acknowledgments

To Barbara Wright-Pryor, longtime president of the Chicago Music Association to which Price herself belonged and a decades-long steward of Price's musical legacy, I owe a deep debt of gratitude for the permission to dedicate this volume to her. For access to the autographs on which this edition is based I thank the Special Collections of the University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville, and Mr. John Pollack, Curator of Research Services in the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts at the University of Pennsylvania. Warmest thanks also to sopranos Aundi Marie Moore (Washington, D.C.) and Dr. Melissa Givens (Pomona College) and pianists Elizabeth Hill (Washington, D.C.) and Dr. Genevieve Feiwen Lee (Pomona College) for having the courage and vision to go where no one has gone before, learning music that has not been performed in living memory and making the world-premiere videos of the extraordinary songs in this volume (available on YouTube). I also thank Dr. Minnita Daniel-Cox, founder of the Dunbar Music Archive at the University of Dayton, for her support. And many thanks are due to Glendower Jones for his interest in publishing this volume, his suggestions and support in producing it, and his labors in shepherding it out into the musical world.

Finally, my enduring gratitude to Cindy, whose valuable insights and patience are matched only by her support for the work of producing this volume.

John Michael Cooper
Denton, Texas
18 November 2023

About this Edition

This is a source-critical edition: editorial additions and changes are kept to a minimum in order to allow the clarity of Florence Price's notated musical text to speak for itself. The lyrics follow Price's manuscripts, and discrepancies between her texts and those of the original poetic sources are identified in the critical notes. Authorial accidentals, including courtesy accidentals, are presented as given in the copy-texts, while editorial accidentals, including courtesy accidentals, are presented in a smaller font directly above or below the affected note except when they occur in the middle of a chord; in the latter instance, editorial accidentals are enclosed in brackets. Editorial tempos, tempo changes, dynamics, and expressive markings are presented in Roman font and enclosed in brackets. Repeat signs are tacitly realized. Editorial extensions of dynamic and tempo changes are presented with hooked ends. Editorial materials may be changed or disregarded at the interpreter's discretion.

Critical Notes

The following are more specific notes concerning the sources for the songs contained in this volume and the variants and editorial interventions presented here. Variants are identified by voice or part, measure number, beat preceded by a /, and note or rest within that beat. Thus: /3.2 means the second note of beat 3. "V" = voice; "Pf," piano ("LH" and "RH" denote left and right hands, respectively). Pitches are identified first as given in this transposed volume, then parenthetically identified as in the original keys.

- *Brown Arms (To Mother)* ([Price])
 - Source: University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville, Special Collections, Florence Beatrice Smith Price Collection, MC 988b Box 1C, folder 32. Fair-copy autograph, undated, marked “For Low Voice”; 4 pp. Evidently submitted to Rodman Wanamaker Competition for Composers of the Negro Race, 1932 (see discussion above).
 - Notes: m. 3, 3, V: dot lacking on /4.1; mm. 6-13, V and Pf: The leftmost measure in the two systems transmitting this passage in the original key has two flat signs (transposed version: five flat signs), but because Price, who was normally meticulous in preparing and cancelling key changes, neither prepares nor cancels this apparent key change, the added flat is probably a slip of the pen; m. 15: treble clef lacking (slip of the pen); m. 16, Pf: slur extends from /2.1 in LH to /4.2 in RH.
- *Four Negro Songs* (Dunbar)
 - Sources: Philological evidence suggests that source **A** was copied from one or more autographs that are now lost, and that source **B** was copied from source **A**, incorporating further changes and corrections. Because Source **B** was evidently written in some haste, Source **A** serves as the primary copy-text for this edition, with final authorial changes derived from Source **B**.
 - **A**: University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Marian Anderson Collection, Manuscripts Ms. Coll. 199, folder 1418. Fair-copy presentation autograph evidently sent to Marian Anderson, bound in cardboard with typed title etiquette: “FOUR NEGRO SONGS / Easy-goin’ / Summah Night / Dat’s My Gal / Goo-bye Jinks” and handwritten “Florence B. Price” beneath main title in pencil. 16 pp. numbered in Price’s hand.
 - **B**: University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville, Special Collections, Florence Beatrice Smith Price Collection, MC 988b Box 4C, folder 27. Fair-copy autograph, enclosed in stiff paper folder with autograph title: “Four Negro Songs, by / Florence B. Price / Easy-goin’ / Summah Night / Dat’s My Gal / Goo’bye Jinks.” 16 pp. numbered in Price’s hand except for p. 16, which is unnumbered.
 - Notes:
 - “Easy-Goin’”: Dated March 21, 1935 in both **A** and **B**. Tempo given as “Very slowly” in **A**; 4, Pf, RH - lacking in **B** (adopted from **A**); 5, V, commas after *hurryin’* and *pell-mell* lacking in **B**; 5, V and Pf: *cresc.* and *dim.* instead of hairpins in **A**; 6, Pf: treble clef lacking in **B**; 7, Pf, RH: /4 written in treble clef in **A**; 8, Pf, RH: /2 - lacking in **B**; 8, Pf, RH: /4 written in bass clef in **B**; change to treble clef in mm. 8ff lacking in **B**; 9, V: *dim.* hp from /3.2 to /4 in **A**; 11, V: staccato marks lacking on /2 through /4.2 in **B**; 11, V: *mp* lacking in **B**; 13, Pf, RH: staccato marks on /4 lacking in **A**; 14, V: hairpins lacking in **B**; 16, Pf, LH: quarter note – dotted half note in **A**; originally quarter note – dotted half note in **B**, changed to two half notes; 20, Pf, RH: /4 originally quarter rest in **A**, changed to quarter note tied to /3.2; 22, Pf: *dim.* instead of hairpin in **A**; 25, V: /3 originally *’round* in **B** (changed to *by*) (Dunbar’s text reads *by*); 25, Pf, RH: /4 written in treble clef in **A**; 30: originally *poco rit.* on /2.3 in **B** (deleted); originally *tempo* on /4.2 in **B** (deleted); 35, Pf: *p* in **B**; 36, V: /4.2 A4 in **A**; 36, Pf, LH: dot lacking on /1-/3 in **B**; 38, V: /2.2 *an* in **B** (Dunbar’s text reads *a*); *cresc.* instead of hairpin in **A**; 39, V: *dim.* instead of hairpin in **A**; 39, Pf, RH: - on /2 lacking in **B**.
 - “Summah Night”: Dated March 21, 1935 in both **A** and **B**. Mm. 3-4, Pf, LH: half rests on /3-/4 lacking in **B**; 12, V: /3-4: originally *E5 – G5 – A5 – G5* (original key: *D5 – F5 – G5 – F5*) in **A**, then corrected in fuchsia pencil to current reading; 14, V: Dunbar’s

text reads *sly* instead of *sky*; in **A**, semicolon after *sky*; 23, Pf, RH: - on /2.2 lacking in **B**.

- “Dat’s My Gal, or The Photograph”: Dated March 20, 1935 in both **A** and **B**. In **A**, titled simply “Dat’s My Gal.” In **B**, full title given, with retroactive pencil addition that *The Photograph* is “preferred.” M. 11, Pf, RH: /1.1-/2.2 beamed together in **A**; 13, Pf, RH: /1.1-/2.2 beamed together in **A**; 14, Pf, RH: /1.1-/2.2 beamed together in **A**; 15, Pf, LH and RH: /1.1-/2.2 beamed together in **A**; 16, Pf, LH and RH: /1.1-/2.2 beamed together in **A**; 16, Pf, *cresc. molto* lacking in **A**; hairpin *crescendo* on /2; 24, Pf, RH: on /2.1-2, second beam lacking in **B**; 25, Pf, RH: - (x4) lacking in **B**; 29-32, Pf, RH: /1.1-/2.2 beamed together in **A**; 34, Pf: *dim.* instead of hairpin in **A**; 42, Pf, RH: slur on /1 lacking in **B**; 43, Pf, RH: slur on /2 lacking in **B**; 51, V, Pf: *crescendo* hairpin instead of *cresc.* in **A**; 70, Pf, LH: slur on /1 lacking in **A**; 72-73, V, Pf: *crescendo* hairpin from 72/1 to 73/2 in **A**.
- “Goo’-Bye, Jinks”: Dated March 20, 1935 in both **A** and **B**. Apostrophe lacking in title in **A**, comma lacking in title in **B**. M. 4, Pf, LH: measure empty in **B**; 4, Pf: *mf* (cautionary) in **A**; 5, V: semicolon after *hump* in **A**; 17, V: *Guess* notated as two tied 8th notes in **A**; 17, Pf: /1-/2 slur lacking in **B**; 19, Pf: /1-/2 slur lacking in **B**; 26, V: in both **A** and **B**, Price writes *long* (Dunbar: *’long*); 28, Pf: slur lacking in **A**; 29, Pf: slur lacking in **A**; 37, V: *mo’nin’* in **A**; 42, V: Price: *do* (Dunbar: *do’*) in both **A** and **B**; 44, V: Price: *sho* in both **A** and **B** (Dunbar: *sho’*); 46, V: Price: *long* in both **A** and **B** (Dunbar: *’long*); 49, V: /4.2 - lacking in **B**; 59, V: /3 originally *B4* in **A** (corrected in fuchsia to *A4*); 62, V: Price: *long* in both **A** and **B** (Dunbar: *’long*); 63, V: “Ef’t hadn’t been” in **A**; Dunbar: *hadn’t a been*.
- *Lullaby (For a Black Mother)* (Hughes)
 - Source: University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville, Special Collections, Florence Beatrice Smith Price Collection, MC 988b Box 5C, folder 32. Autograph score, dated March 21-24, 1945. 4 pp. Labeled “Home copy” in Price’s hand.
 - Notes: M. 4, Pf: RH /3-4 written as half-bar repeat; 59-60, V: *E* (original key: *C*) tied from 59-60.
- *My Soul and I* (Tolson)
 - Source: University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville, Special Collections, Florence Beatrice Smith Price Collection, MC 988b Box 1C, folder 32. Autograph score, dated July 31 – August 1, 1947. The manuscript originally began with m. 3. Mm. 1-2 were added in pencil retroactively, together with note: “From ‘Rendez-Vous with America’ by Melvin B. Tolson / Dodd [&] Mead Co. NY 1944.” Mm. 17-18 were originally notated after m. 20, but relocated via insertion bracket.
 - Notes: M. 14, V: Tolson: “tiered”; 18, Pf: RH empty; 27, Pf: RH rest lacking on /2; LH notated as whole note; 29, Pf, LH: fermata lacking; 31, Pf: LH /3-4 notated as four quarter notes (beam omitted); 35, Pf: RH *8va* written over first note of measure only, with no extension. The transposition must continue through at least the end of m. 35 to avoid collision with the LH, but this edition continues it through m. 48 because there is no earlier place where discontinuing it is musically sensible; 47-48, V: tie lacking.

BROWN ARMS

(To Mother)

original key: D minor

[Florence B. Price (1887 or 1888-1953)]
[poem by Florence B. Price]
edited by John Michael Cooper

Andante moderato

Voice

mp

V.

Lis - ten, _____ Oh brown kind moth - er,

BROWN ARMS

5

V. *I am wea - ry ——— and I would*

8 *rit.* *a tempo*

V. *rest.* *Put your old warm*

11 *arms a - bout me, Let me lie on your*

11

* See critical note regarding mm. 6-13, p. vi.

13

V. *mf*

with - ered breast. _____ I am ver - y

13

*b**

mf

16

V. *cresc. e accel.* *ff* *a tempo*

sick of cit - ies, of fac - es cold _____

16

cresc. *ff* *8va*

18

V. *poco rit.* *poco meno mosso* *mp*

_____ and strange; _____ I long for your

18

mp

BROWN ARMS

20 *cresc.* -----, *p* *ff*

V. sun - washed spac - es, — blue skies, and

20 *cresc.* -----, *p*

22 *a tempo*

V. wind - - - - - swept range.

22 *ff* *8va* ----- [gliss.]*

24

V.

24

* In the original key, the downward scale is from A to C and is marked "gliss." In the transposed version, the scale should be played as rapidly as possible to create the effect of a glissando.

BROWN ARMS

5

V. 27 [p] I am

27

V. 30 sick of the hud-dled hous-es And the

30 *p*

30

V. 32 self - ish hearts of men.

32 *rit.* *cantabile* *p*

32

BROWN ARMS

35

V. Put your warm kind arms a - bout ____

35

38

V. me. Let me lie ____

38

41

V. — on your heart.

41

The image displays a musical score for the song "Brown Arms". It is organized into three systems, each featuring a vocal line (V.) and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The first system (measures 35-37) shows the vocal line with the lyrics "Put your warm kind arms a - bout ____". The piano accompaniment consists of a steady eighth-note bass line and a treble line with chords and eighth-note patterns. The second system (measures 38-40) continues the vocal line with "me. Let me lie ____". The piano accompaniment features a more complex treble line with a melodic motif and sustained chords in the bass. The third system (measures 41-43) concludes the vocal line with "— on your heart.". The piano accompaniment in this system includes a key change to two flats (B-flat and E-flat) in the final measure, indicated by a double bar line and a key signature change.

V. *poco meno mosso*

44 *cresc.* *f*

Let me lie, let me lie on your heart, on your

44 *cresc.* *f*

V. *rit.* *mp* *molto cresc.* *ff* *accel.*

47 heart, on your heart a - gain. _____

47 *mp* *molto cresc.* *ff* *8va*

FOUR NEGRO SONGS

1. Easy-goin'

(to Edith)

original key: F major

Florence B. Price (1887 or 1888-1953)

Poems by Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872-1906)

edited by John Michael Cooper

March 21, 1935

Andante ♩ = 69

Voice

mf

There ain't no use in all this strife, An'

mf

V.

mf

hur-ry-in', pell-mell, right thru life. I don't be-lieve in go-in' too fast To

mf

8va

V. 8

see what kind o' road you've passed. It ain't no mor - tal kind o' good, 'N' I

This system contains the first two measures of the piece. The vocal line (treble clef) begins with a melodic phrase starting on G4, marked with an accent (>) and a slur. The piano accompaniment (grand staff) features a steady eighth-note bass line in the left hand and chords in the right hand. Measure 2 includes a piano dynamic marking of *mp*.

V. 10 *mp*

would-n't hur - ry ef I could. I like to jest go jog-gin' a - long, _____

This system contains measures 3 through 6. The vocal line continues the melody, with a piano dynamic marking of *mp* at the start and *[mp]* later. The piano accompaniment consists of chords in the right hand and a simple bass line in the left hand.

V. 13 *mf*

To lim-ber up my soul with song; _____ To stop a - while an' chat with

This system contains measures 7 through 10. The vocal line features a melodic phrase marked with an accent (>) and a slur, with a piano dynamic marking of *mf* at the start and *mp* later. The piano accompaniment includes chords in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Measure 10 is marked with a piano dynamic of *p* and the instruction *legato*.

V. 16 *mf* *mp cresc.* *mf*

men, ——— 'N' drink some ci - der now and then.

mf *mp cresc.* *mf* *p*

V. 20

20

mf

V. 24 *mf* *mf*

Don' want no boss a - stand - in' by To see me work; I — al - lus

24 *mf* *mf*

V. 27

try To do my du-ty right straight up, An' earn what fills my plate an' cup. An'

8va -

V. 30

ez fur boss, I'll be my own; I like to jest be let a-lone To plough my strip an' tend my

mf

[*mf*]

V. 33

bees, An' do jes ez I dog-gone please.

cresc. *f*

cresc. *f*

V. 36 *p* *cresc.* *mf*

My head's al - right an' my heart is mel - ler,

V. 38 *mp* *poco rit.*

But I'm a eas - y go - in' fel - ler.

or

V. 39 *ossia* *rit.*

fel - ler.

2. Summah Night

original key: B-flat major

13

March 21, 1935

Tempo moderato ♩ = 112

Voice *mp*

Sum-mah is de lov - in' time -

mp

4 - Don' keer what you say. Night is al - lus peart an' prime, Bet-tah dan de day. Dough de

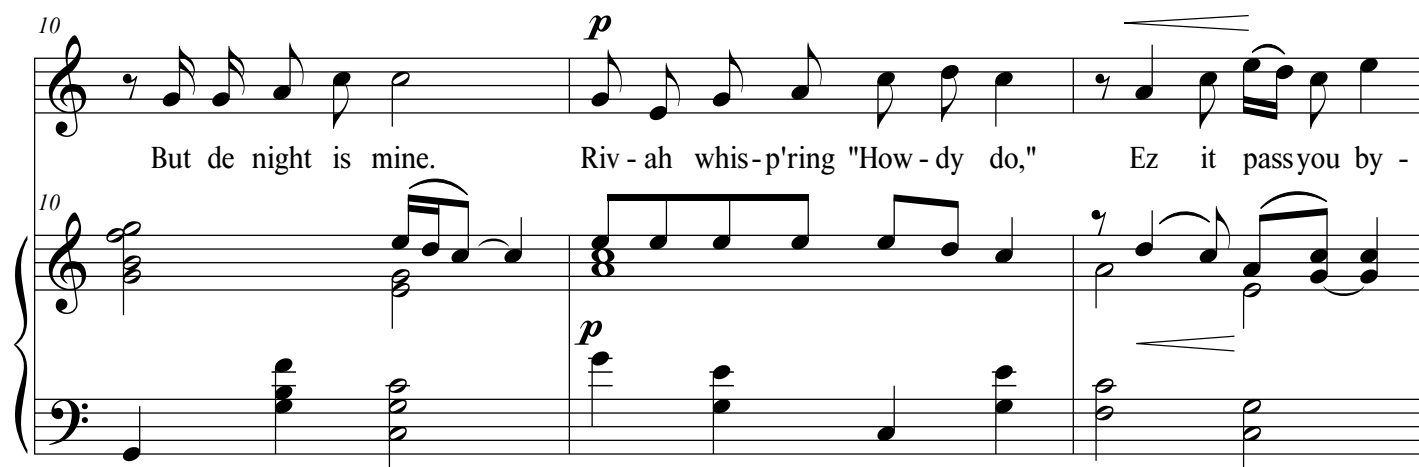
7 day is sweet an' good, Birds a - sing-in' fine; Pines a - smell-in' in de wood,

mf

mf

10 *p*

But de night is mine. Riv - ah whis-p'ring "How - dy do," Ez it pass you by -



13 *mf*

Moon a - look-in' down at you, Wink-in' in de sky. Frogs a - croak - in' f'om de pond,



16

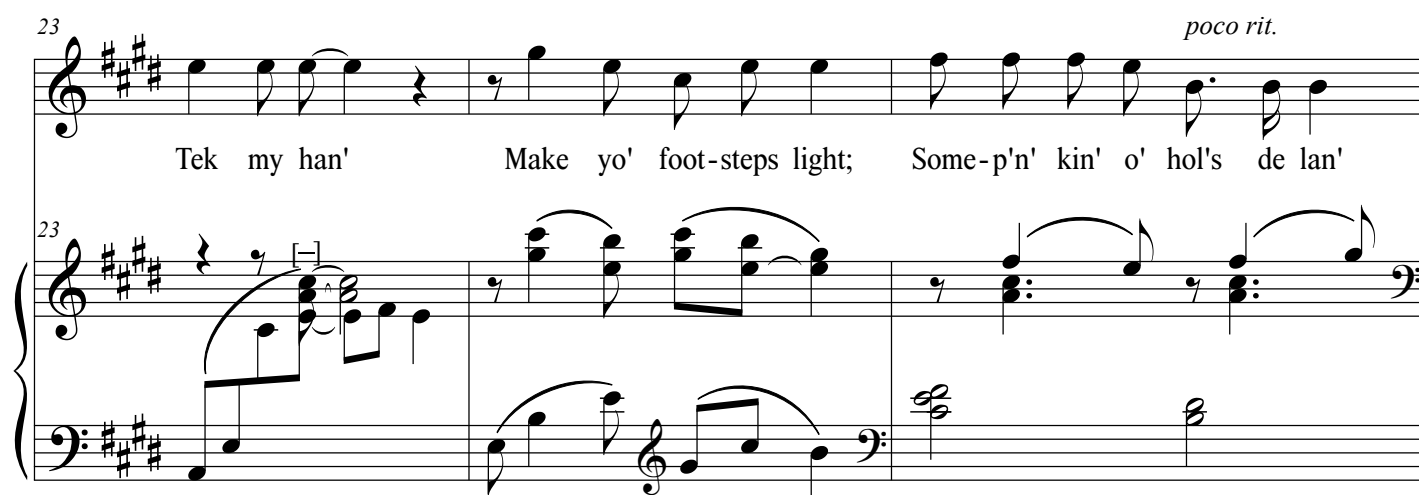
Sing - in' bass dey fill; An' you lis - ten way be - yon' _____ Ol' man whip - po - will.



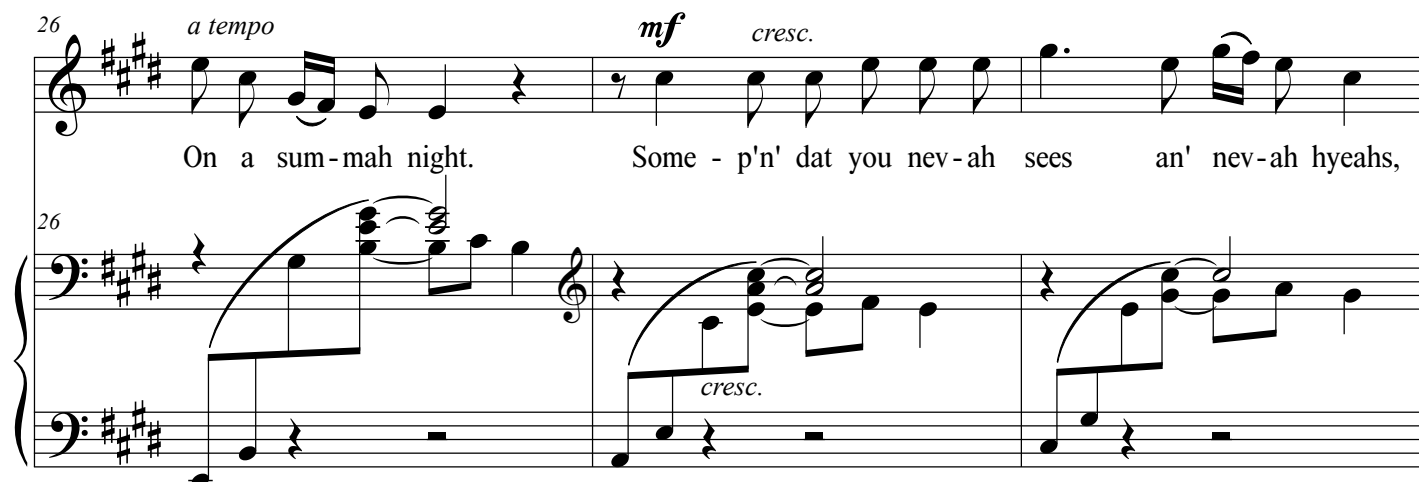
19 *più mosso*
mp
Hush up, hon - ey,



23 *poco rit.*
Tek my han' Make yo' foot-steps light; Some-p'n' kin' o' hol's de lan'



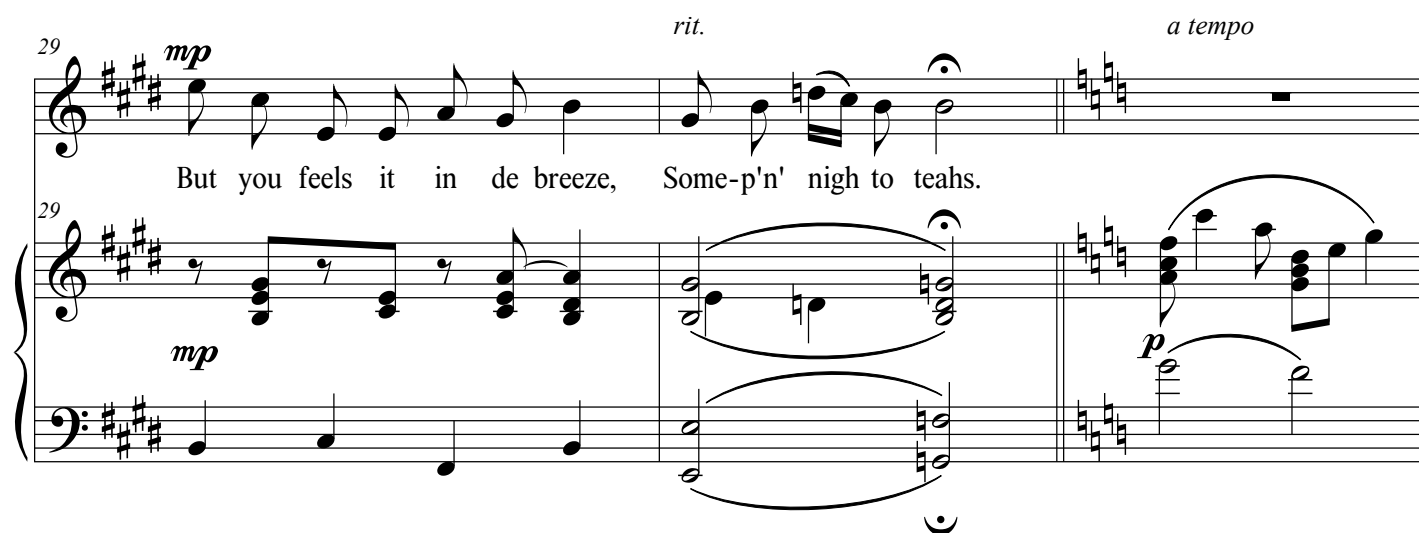
26 *a tempo* *mf* *cresc.*
On a sum-mah night. Some - p'n' dat you nev-ah sees an' nev-ah hyeahs,



29 *mp* *rit.* *a tempo*

But you feels it in de breeze, Some-p'n' nigh to teahs.

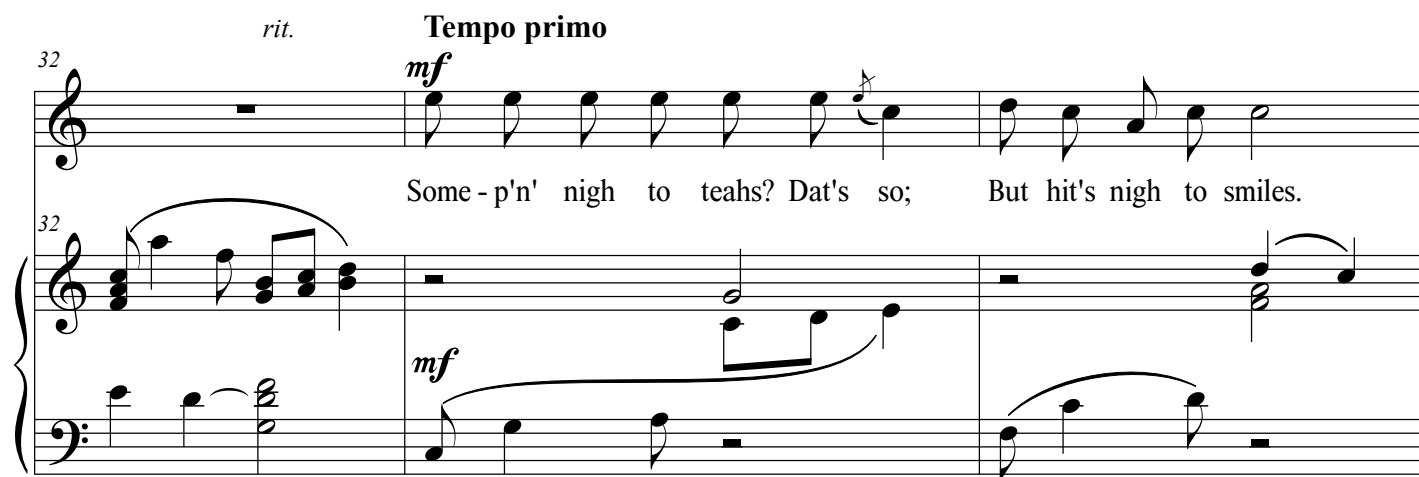
29 *mp* *p*



rit. **Tempo primo** *mf*

Some - p'n' nigh to teahs? Dat's so; But hit's nigh to smiles.

32 *mf*



35 *cresc.*

An' you feels it ez you go down de shin - in' miles. Tek my han', Tek my

35 *cresc.*



38 *f* *rit.*

han', Tek my han', my lit - tle dove; Hush an' come er - way.

38 *f*

poco meno mosso

41 *mp*

Sum-mah is de time fu' love, Night-time beats de day.

41 *mp*

3. Dat's My Gal or The Photograph

original key: F major

March 20, 1935

Allegretto ♩ = 80

Voice

mp *cresc.*

See dis pict-yah in my han'? Dat's my gal; Ain't she

mf *mp* *cresc.*

6 *mf* *mp*

pur - ty? good - ness lan'! _____ Huh name is

6 *mf* *mp*

11 *mf* *mp*

Sal. Dat's de ver - y way she be— Kin' o' tick - les

11 *mf* *mp*

16 *cresc. molto* *f* *mf*

me to see — huh mil-in' back — at me. — She

16 *cresc. molto* *f* *mf*

22 sent me dis pho - to-graph Jes las' week; An' al - dough hit made me laugh—

22 *mp*

26 *mf crescendo* ———

My black cheek Felt some-thin' a-run-nin' queer; Bless yo' soul, 'twas a

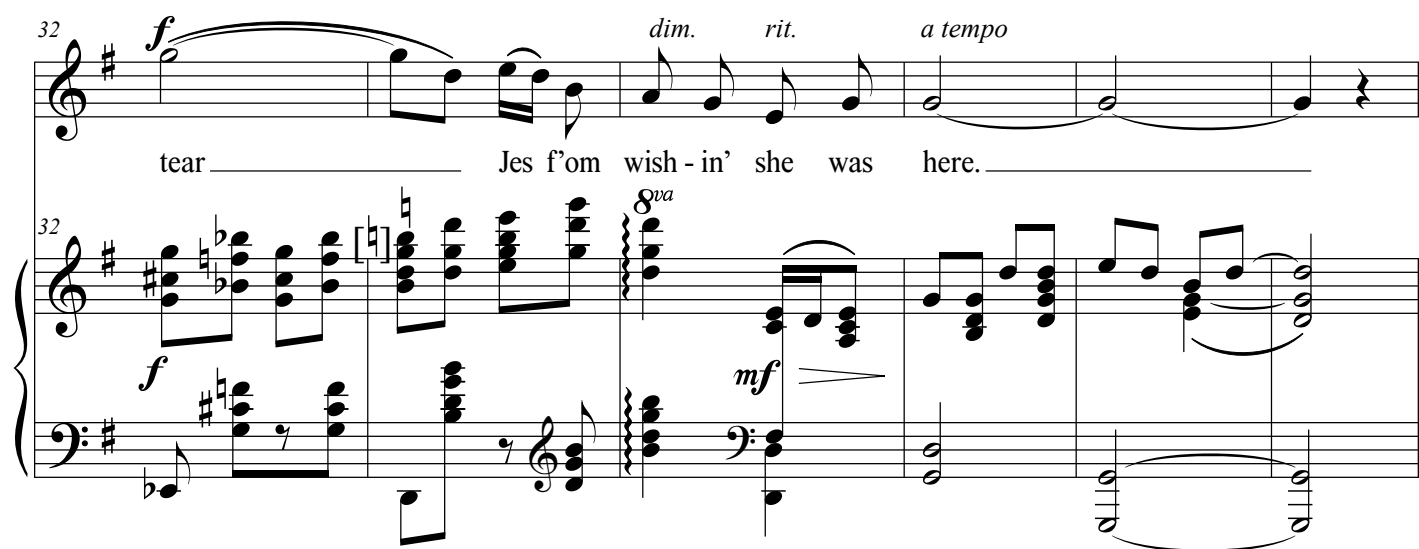
26 *mf crescendo*

8va

32 *f* *dim.* *rit.* *a tempo*

tear _____ Jes f'om wish-in' she was here. _____

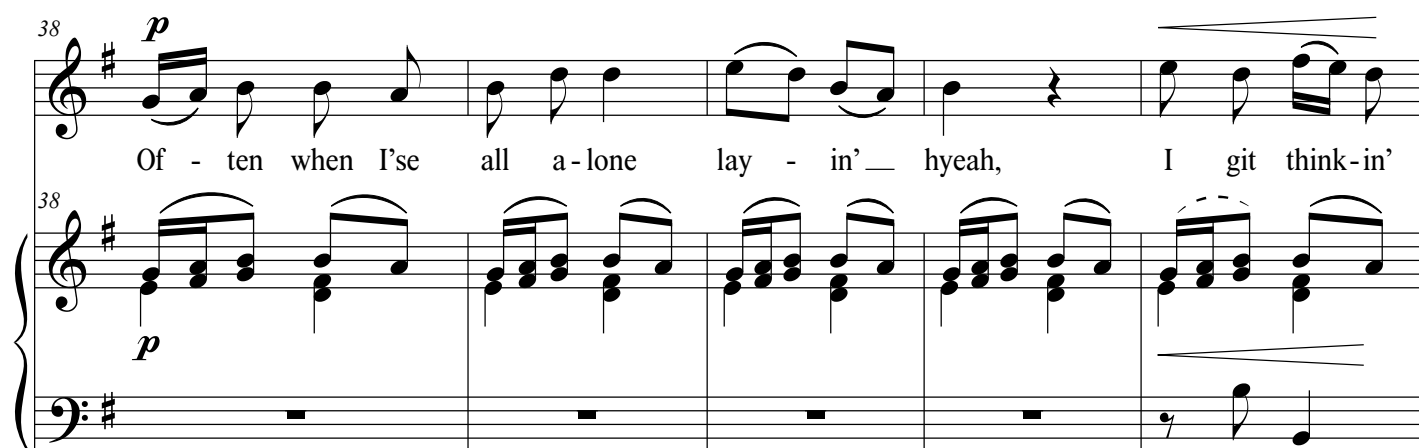
32 *f* *mf* *8va*



38 *p*

Of - ten when I'se all a-lone lay - in' — hyeah, I git think-in'

38 *p*



43 *dim.* *mp*

'bout my own Sal - lie — dear; How she — say dat I'se huh beau,

43 *mp*



48 *poco rit.* *a tempo*

An' hit tick - les me to know Dat de gal — do lub me

52 *f* *p*

so! — do lub me so!

56 *mf* *mp*

Some bright day I'se go - in' back, Fo' de lawd! An' ez sho's my

61 *crescendo*

face is black, Ax huh pa Fu de bless-ed lit-tle miss Who's a - smil - in'

66 *f*

smil - - - in' smil - - - in' out - a dis

70 *rit.* *a tempo mf cresc.* *poco rit.*

pict - yah like she wan'd a kiss! — smil - in'

4. Goo'-bye, Jinks

original key: D major

23

March 20, 1935

Tempo moderato ♩ = 112

mf

Voice

Goo'-bye Jinks, —

mf

5

dim.

— I got to hump. — Got to mek dis po - ny jump; jump.

5

dim.

9

See — dat sun a - go - in' down —

9

The musical score is written for voice and piano in D major (three sharps) and 4/4 time. The tempo is marked 'Tempo moderato' with a quarter note equal to 112 beats. The score is divided into three systems. The first system shows the beginning of the piece with a piano introduction marked 'mf' and a voice entry marked 'mf' singing 'Goo'-bye Jinks, —'. The second system starts at measure 5, with the voice singing 'I got to hump. — Got to mek dis po - ny jump; jump.' and the piano accompaniment featuring a 'dim.' (diminuendo) marking. The third system starts at measure 9, with the voice singing 'See — dat sun a - go - in' down —' and the piano accompaniment continuing with various musical textures and dynamics.

13 *più mosso*
mf

'N' me a - fool - in' hyeah in town! Git up, git up Suke, go

16 *a tempo*
mp

'long! Guess Mi - ran-dy'll think I'se tight, _____

19 *più mosso*
mf *p*

— Me not home an' com-in' on de night. What's dat stand-in' by de

22 *mf* *a tempo*

fence? Pshaw! why don't I lun some sense? Git up Suke, go

22 *sf* *mf*

Poco meno mosso

26 *mp*

'long! Guess I spent down dah at Jinks' Mos' a dol-lah

26 *mp*

31 *poco rit.* **Allegretto** *f*

fur de drinks. Bless yo' soul, you see dat star? Lawd!

31 *mf*

35 *a tempo* ***mf*** *mp* ***Tempo primo*** ***mf***

but won't M - iran - dy rar? Git up Suke go 'long! Went dis mown-in',

35 ***mf*** *mp* ***mf***

38 hyeah it's night, Dah's de cab-in dah in sight. Who's dat stand-in' in de

38

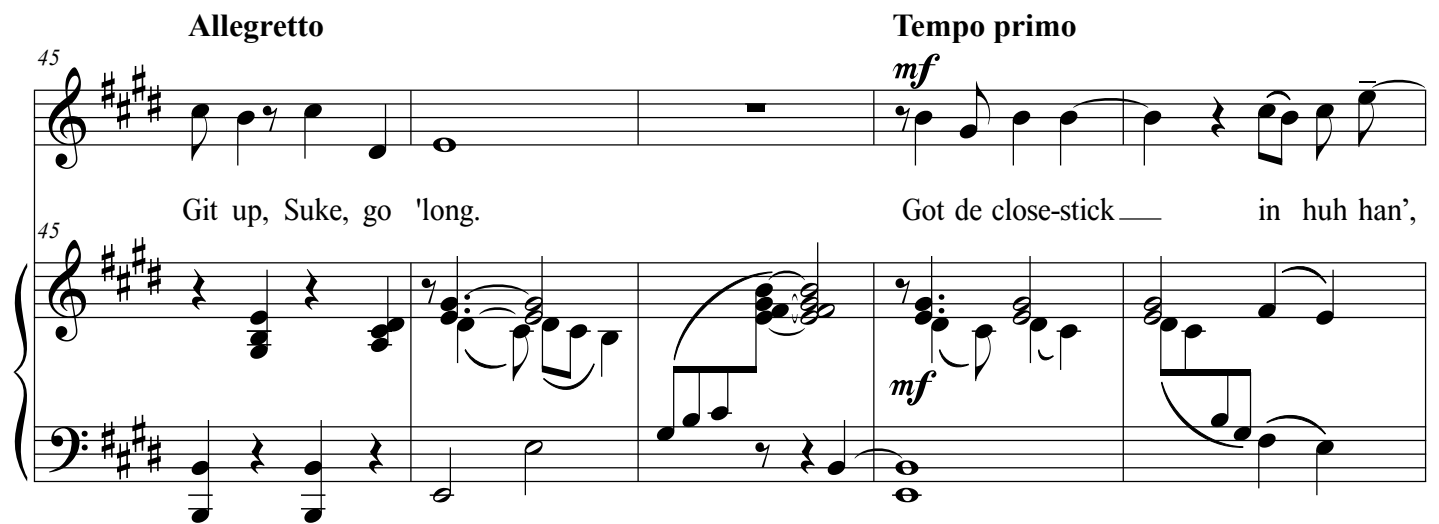
42 *mp* *poco rit.*

do'? — Dat must be Mi - ran - dy sho',

42 *mp*

Allegretto **Tempo primo**
mf

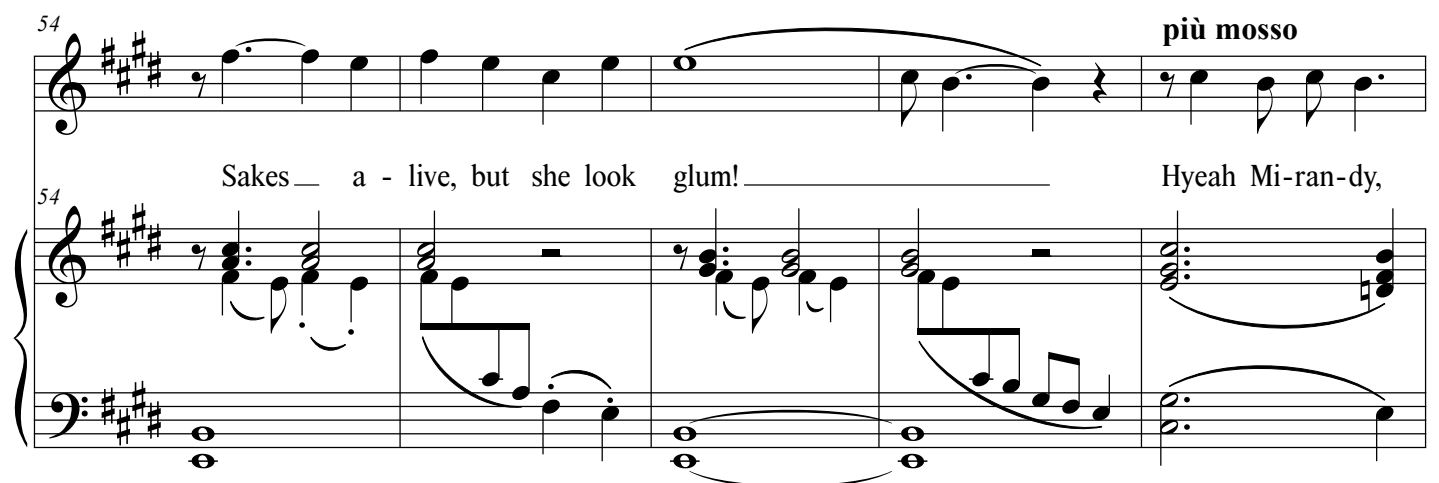
45 Git up, Suke, go 'long. Got de close-stick — in huh han',



50 — Dat look fun - ny, good - ness lan', —



54 **più mosso**
Sakes — a - live, but she look glum! — Hyeah Mi-ran-dy,



59 *accel.*

hyeah I come, yeah I come, yeah I come, yeah I come! Git up, Suke, go 'long!

63 *a piacere*
mf

(spoken:) Ef it hadn't a' been fur you, Hm.(humming) _____
you slow ole fool, I'd a' ben home
long fo' now!

mf
8va -1
Led.

LULLABY

(For a Black Mother)

original key: F major

Florence B. Price (1887 or 1888-1953)

poem by Langston Hughes (1901-1967)

edited by John Michael Cooper

March 21-24, 1945

Andante con moto

Voice *mp*

My lit - tle dark ba - by

mp

mf *dim.* *cresc.*

My lit-tle earth-thing My lit-tle love - one What shall I sing

mf *dim.* *cresc.*

LULLABY
(For a Black Mother)

8 *poco rit.* *a tempo* [Allegretto] *mp*

What shall I sing for your lull-a-by? Stars

8 *p* *mp*

12 stars A neck-lace of stars wind - ing the night

12

17 *poco rit.* *a tempo* *p* *poco rit.*

Stars stars A neck-lace of stars LH

17 *p* *mf*

LULLABY
(For a Black Mother)

31

22 *a tempo* *mp* [poco rit.] *a tempo* *p* [Andante con moto] *mf*

A neck-lace of stars wind-ing the night My

27 *mp*

lit - tle black ba - by My dark bo-dy's ba - by

31

What shall I sing,— What shall I sing for your lull-a - by

LULLABY
(For a Black Mother)

34 *rit.* *p* **Allegretto** *mp*

for your lull - a - by? Moon moon



38 Great dia - mond moon kiss-ing the night.



43 *mp* Moon Great dia - mond moon



LULLABY
(For a Black Mother)

33

48

Great dia - mond moon

48

Tempo I

[mp]

52

My lit - tle dark

LH RH

mp

52

56

ba - by night black - ba - by,

56

LULLABY
(For a Black Mother)

Allegretto
59 *mp*

Stars stars moon night stars,

59 *mp*

64 [pp] *meno mosso*
p

moon, for your sleep - song

64 *pp*

68 *a tempo* *rit.*

lull - a - by.

68 *p*

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It begins at measure 59 with the tempo marking 'Allegretto' and dynamic 'mp'. The vocal line starts with the lyrics 'Stars stars moon night stars,'. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a more complex, arpeggiated pattern in the left hand. At measure 64, the tempo changes to 'meno mosso' and the dynamics shift to '[pp]' for the vocal line and 'p' for the piano. The vocal line continues with 'moon, for your sleep - song'. The piano accompaniment becomes more sparse, with the right hand playing a simple melody and the left hand providing harmonic support. At measure 68, the tempo returns to 'a tempo' and then 'rit.' (ritardando). The vocal line concludes with 'lull - a - by.'. The piano accompaniment features a series of long, sustained chords in the left hand, creating a lulling effect. The score ends with a double bar line at the final measure.

MY SOUL AND I

original key: E major

35

Florence B. Price (1887 or 1888-1953)

poem by Melvin B. Tolson (1898-1966)

edited by John Michael Cooper

July 31 - August 1, 1947

Andante

Voice

p

We sit a -

p

V.

mp

lone on the pearl - dust couch on the shore, _____

mp

p

V. 7

my soul and I

V. 10

pp *cresc. e accel.* *mf*

Nor watch the gold - en

[*cresc.*] *mf*

V. 13

a tempo *dim.* *mp* *cresc.*

pyres tiered in the West

dim. *mp* *cresc.*

V. 16 [mf]

— where sun - rays die, my soul and

16

16

mf

V. 19 *mp*

I.

19 *mp*

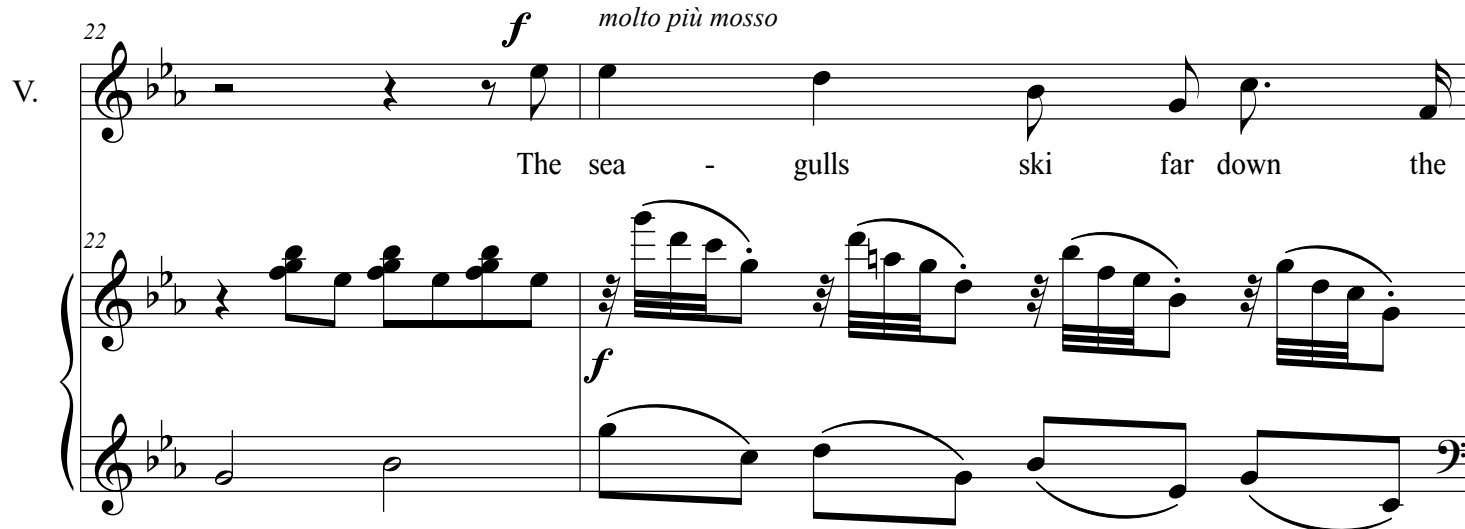
19

mp

Tempo moderato*molto più mosso*

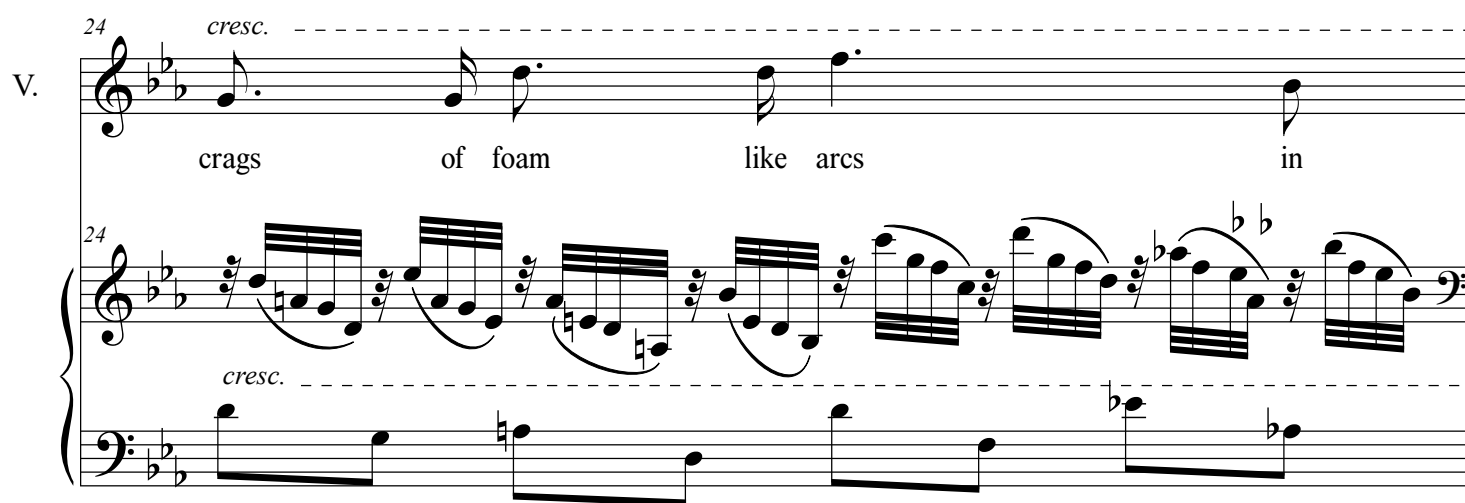
V. 22 *f*

The sea - gulls ski far down the



V. 24 *cresc.*

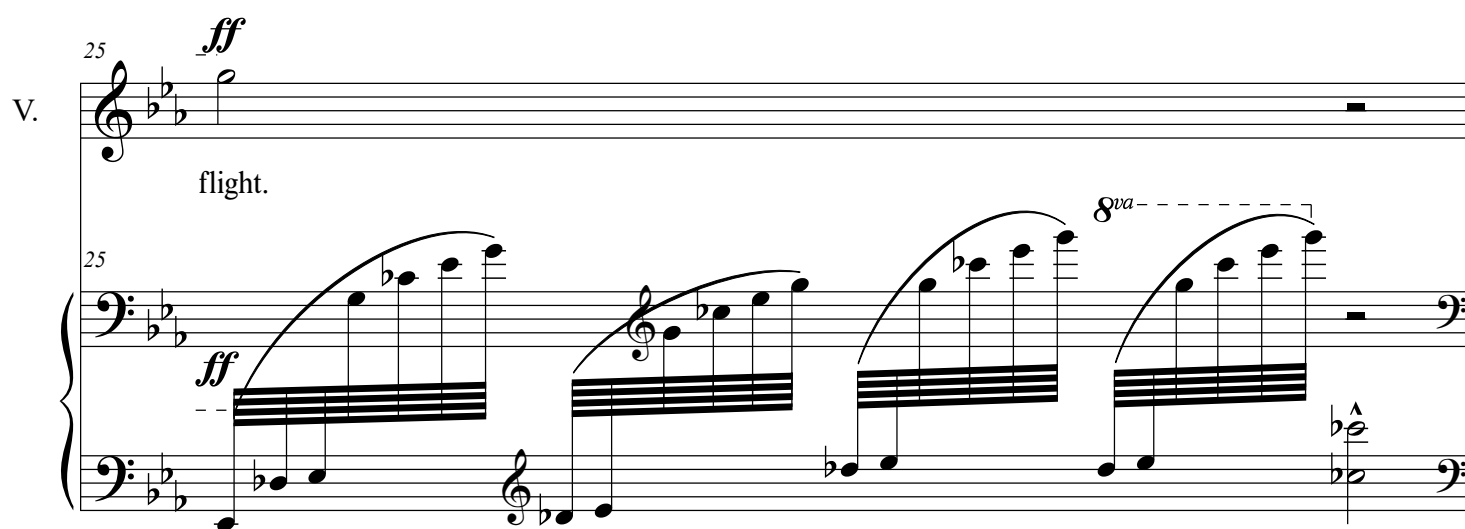
craggs of foam like arcs in



V. 25 *ff*

flight.

8va



Tempo primo
mp

V. 26

But we are balmed in a shad-ow land of dreams that

26 *mp*

V. 28

dusk the sight, that dusk the sight. Though

28 *G.P. f*

Tempo moderato

V. 30

thick white py - thons of the tide thresh in, — And

30 *f*

V. 33 *rit.*

ships _____ crawl by.

8^{va} -----

[dim.] -----

V. 36 **Tempo primo**
mp

And night lets slip Ve - ne - tian

(8^{va}) -----

mp

[cresc.]

[cresc.]

V. 39 *dim.*

blinds, _____ we dream, _____

(8^{va}) -----

[*dim.*]

[*dim.*]

V. *mp* *mp*

42

my soul and I.

mp

(8^{va})

42

V. *rit. e dim.*

45

We dream.

[dim.] *[pp]*

(8^{va})

45

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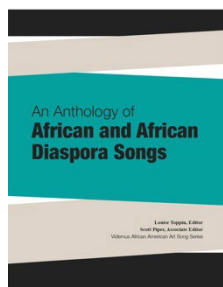


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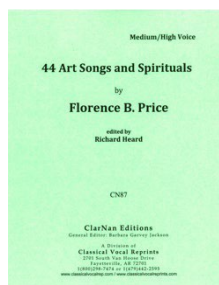
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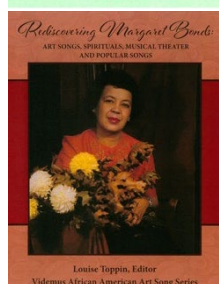


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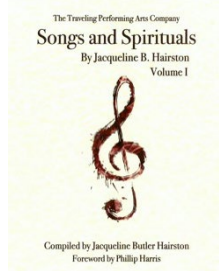
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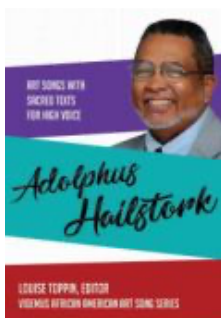
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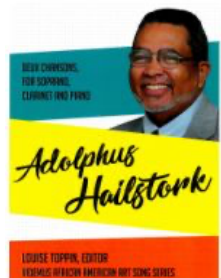
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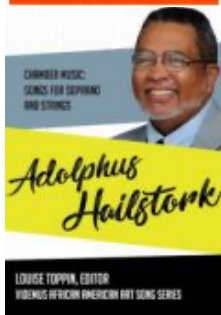
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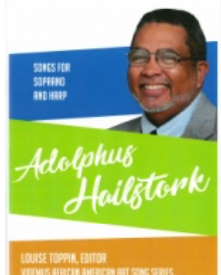
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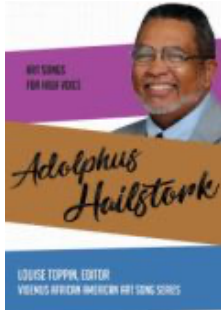
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