Draw On Sweet Night

John Wilbye

From the Second Set of Madrigals, 1609

Transcribed by Peter Billam

For SSATTB or SSAATB Recorders

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This printing 9 April 2009.

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Draw on, sweet Night, by John Wilbye

John Wilbye was born at Diss in Norfolk in 1574, the third son of Matthew Wilbye, a prosperous tanner, local landholder and amateur lutenist. Within a few miles of Diss was Brome Hall, the seat of Sir Thomas Cornwallis, and John Wilbye's musical talents attracted the attention of the Hall.

In 1593, shortly after Cornwallis' daughter Elizabeth was married to Sir Thomas Kytson of Hengrave Hall near Bury St. Edmunds in Suffolk, John Wilbye was appointed a household musician to the Kytsons, and remained in their service for thirty years. In 1598 Wilbye published his *First Set of Madrigals to 3. 4. 5. and 6. Voices*, containing thirty great madrigals, including the bright *Flora gave me fairest flowers* and *Adieu sweet Amaryllis*, and the darker *Of joys and pleasing pains* and *Alas what a wretched life*.

Sir Thomas died in 1602, but Lady Kytson maintained Hengrave Hall in the same degree of state. In 1609 Wilbye published *The Second Set of Madrigals To 3. 4. 5. and 6. parts, apt both for Voyals and Voices* which contains thirty-four great compositions, including the bright *Sweet honey-sucking bees* and *Stay, Corydon* and the darker *Oft have I vowed*, and number 31, *Draw On Sweet Night* :

Draw on, sweet Night, best friend unto those cares
That do arise from painful melancholy.
My life so ill through want of comfort fares,
That unto thee I consecrate it wholly.

Sweet Night, draw on ! My griefs, when they are told
To shades and darkness, find some ease from paining,
And while thou all in silence dost enfold,
I then shall have best time for my complaining.

The poet has not been identified. This six-part setting lies half way between Wilbye's abstract, purely musical style, and his madrigal style. Together with *The Lady Oriana*, which Wilbye contributed to the *Triumphs of Oriana* collection, and two motets which he contributed to Leighton's *Teares or Lamentations*, these two sets of madrigals constitute Wilbye's entire output and place him together with Byrd, Morley and Weelkes as one of the greatest of English composers.

In 1613 Lady Kytson granted Wilbye a lease of Sexten's Farm, reputed the best sheep farm in the district. Wilbye employed a bailiff to run the farm, and continued to live at Hengrave Hall, but his new interest seems to have ended his composing; perhaps such an activity was not appropriate for the landed gentleman he was now becoming.

After Lady Kytson's death in 1628, Wilbye went to live at the house of Lady Rivers in Colchester. Lady Rivers, a few years older than Wilbye, was the youngest daughter of Sir Thomas Kytson, and had always been a particular patroness of the composer. Her marriage to Lord Rivers had not been happy, and when she left the family seat at St. Osyth she moved to Colchester, some nine miles distant. Lady Rivers' house still stands today, as indeed does Hengrave Hall.

Wilbye died in 1638 and was buried at Holy Trinity, Colchester. He bequeathed a comparatively important estate, mostly to his nephews and nieces. He owned four hundred pounds, and land around Bury St. Edmunds and around Diss. His best viol went to Charles, Prince of Wales, later Charles II.

Peter J Billam

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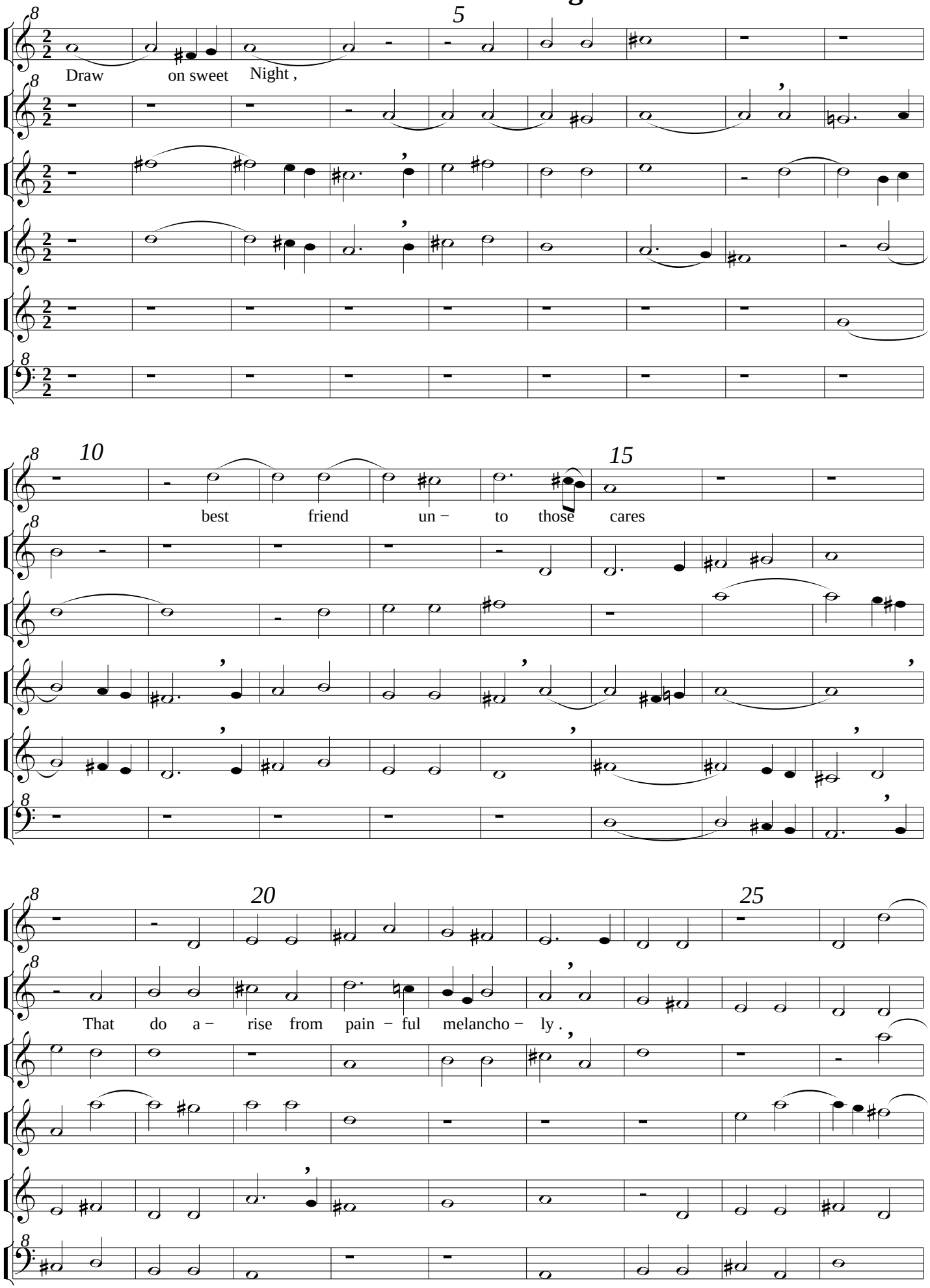
Draw On Sweet Night



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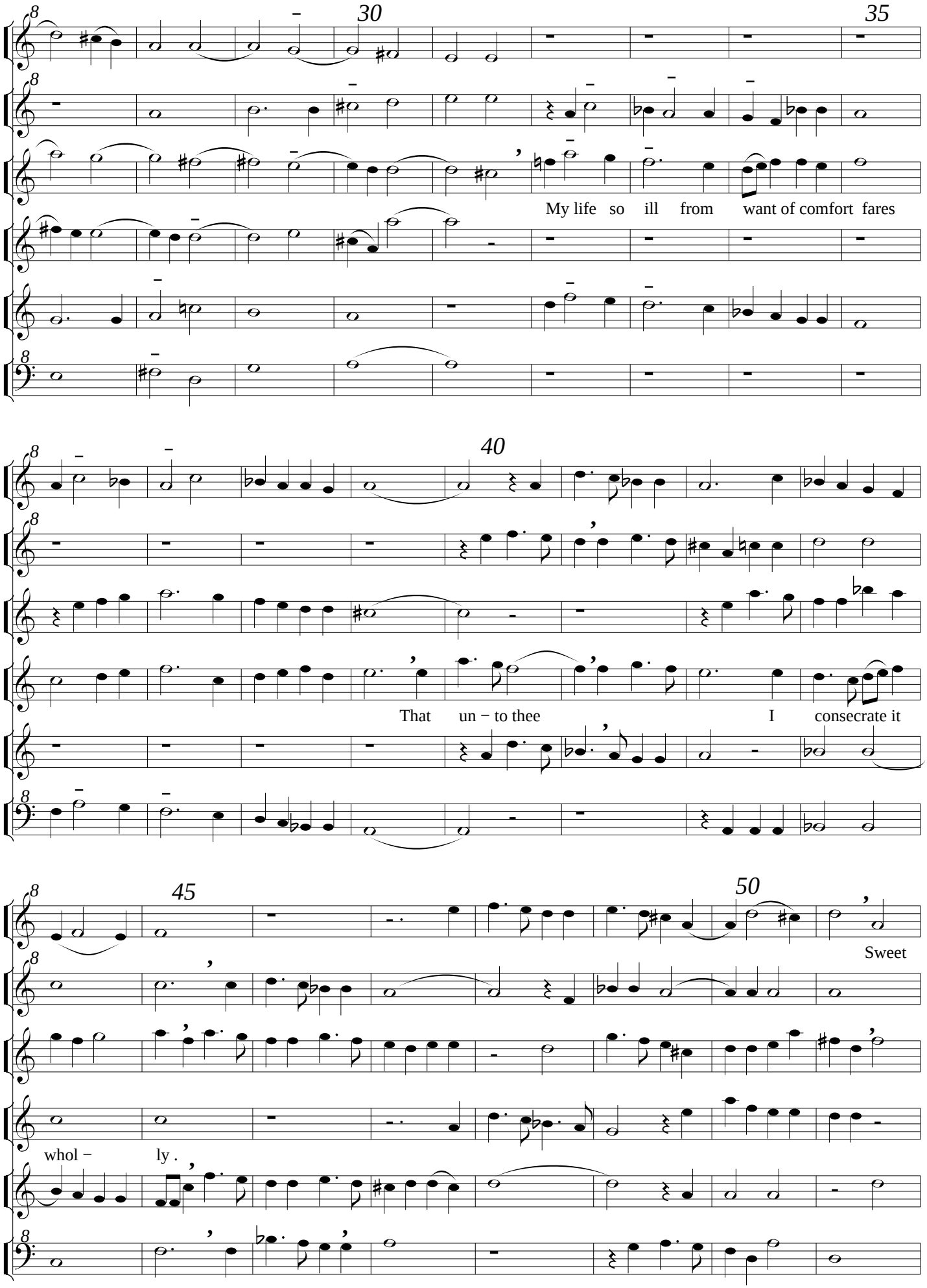

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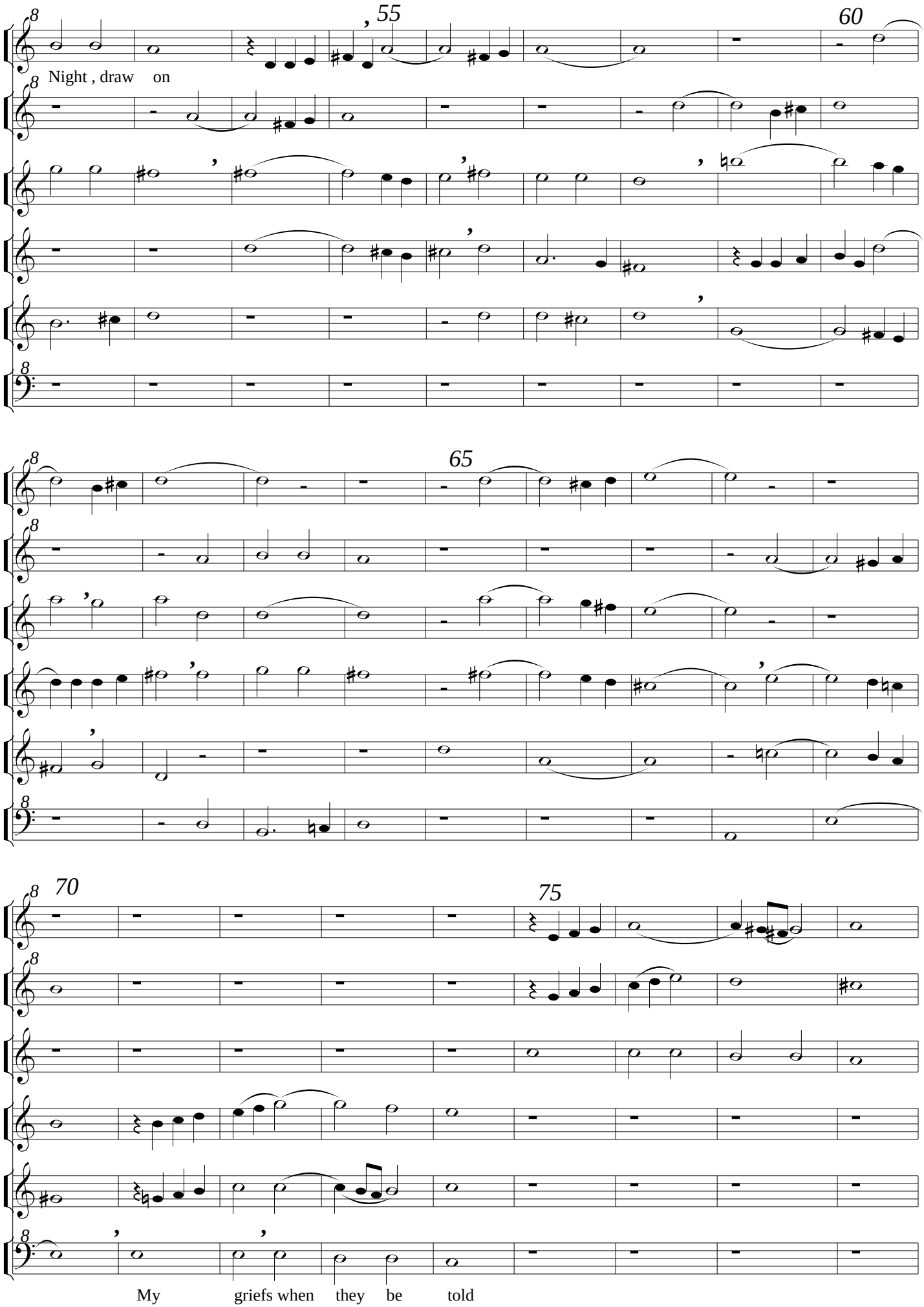

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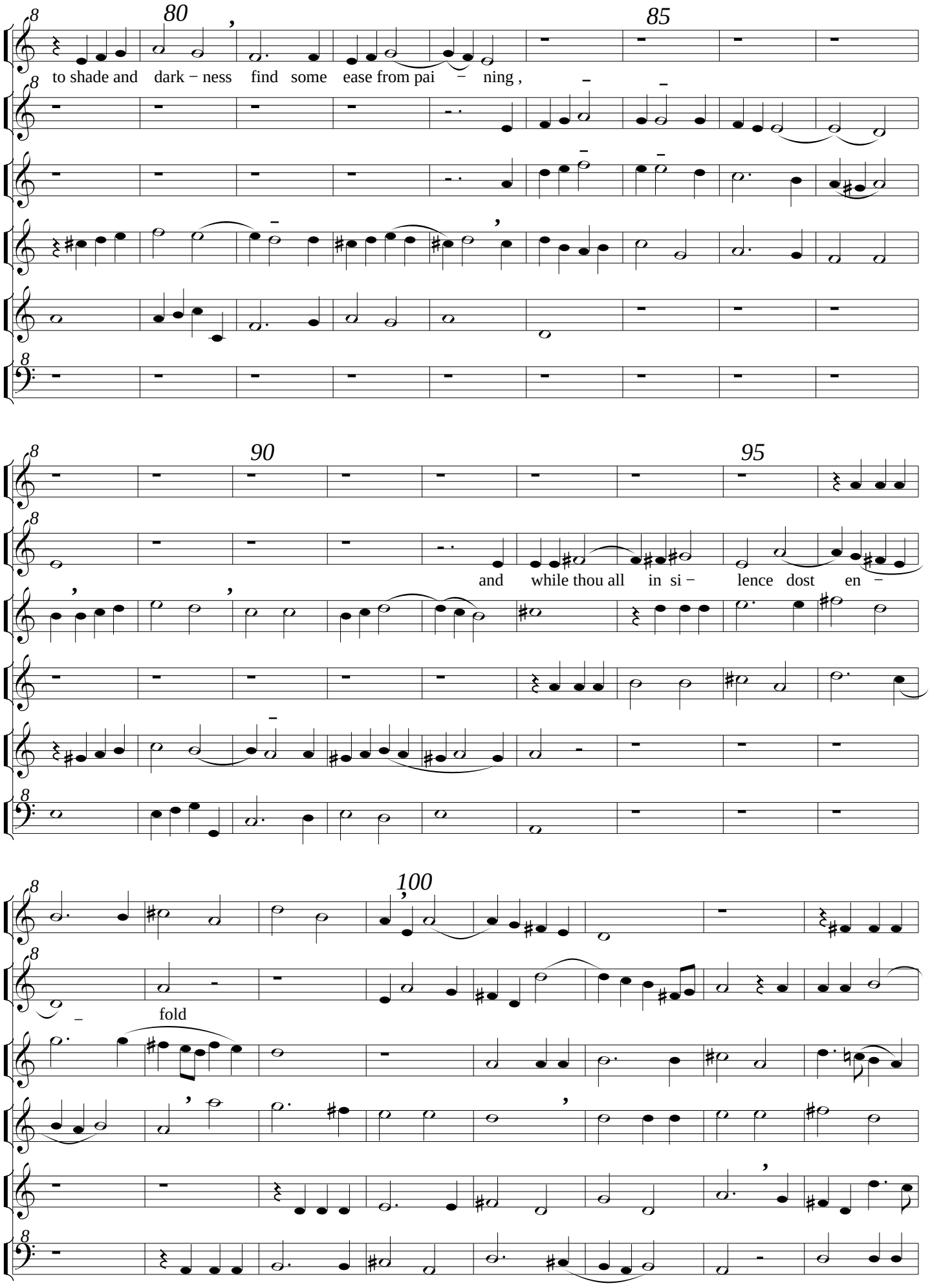
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to shade and dark − ness find some ease from pai − ning ,
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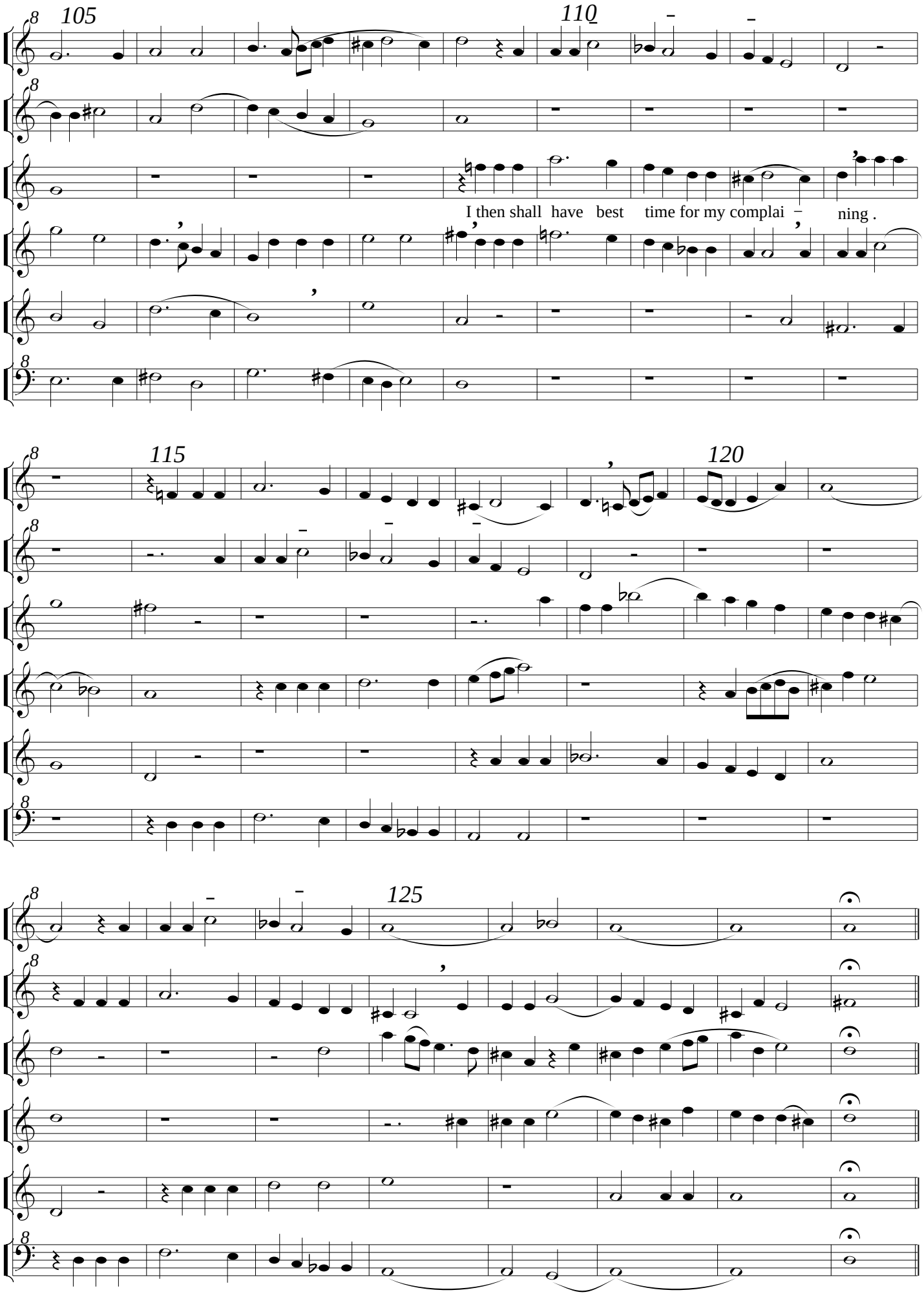

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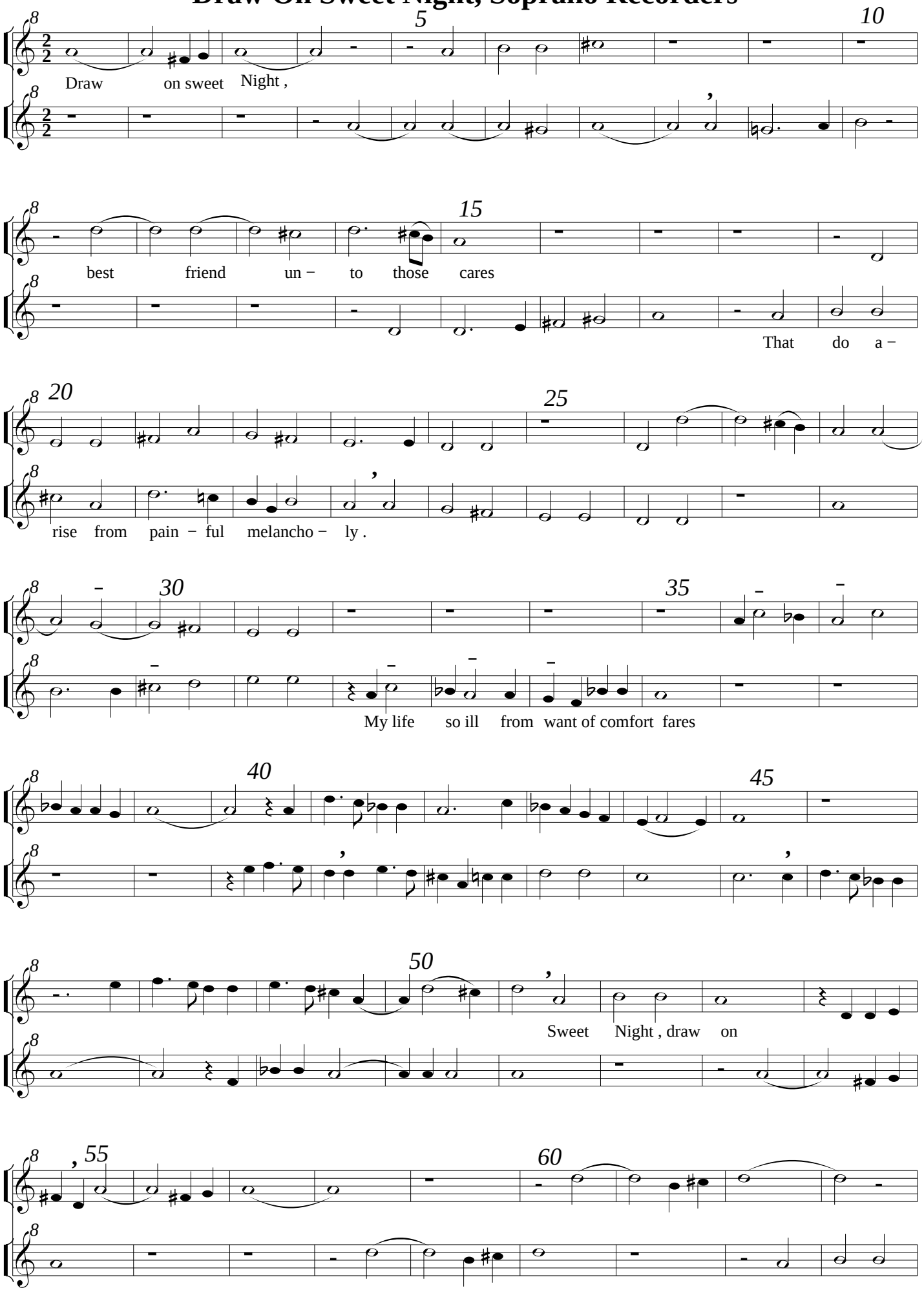
John Wilbye

Draw On Sweet Night, Soprano Recorders



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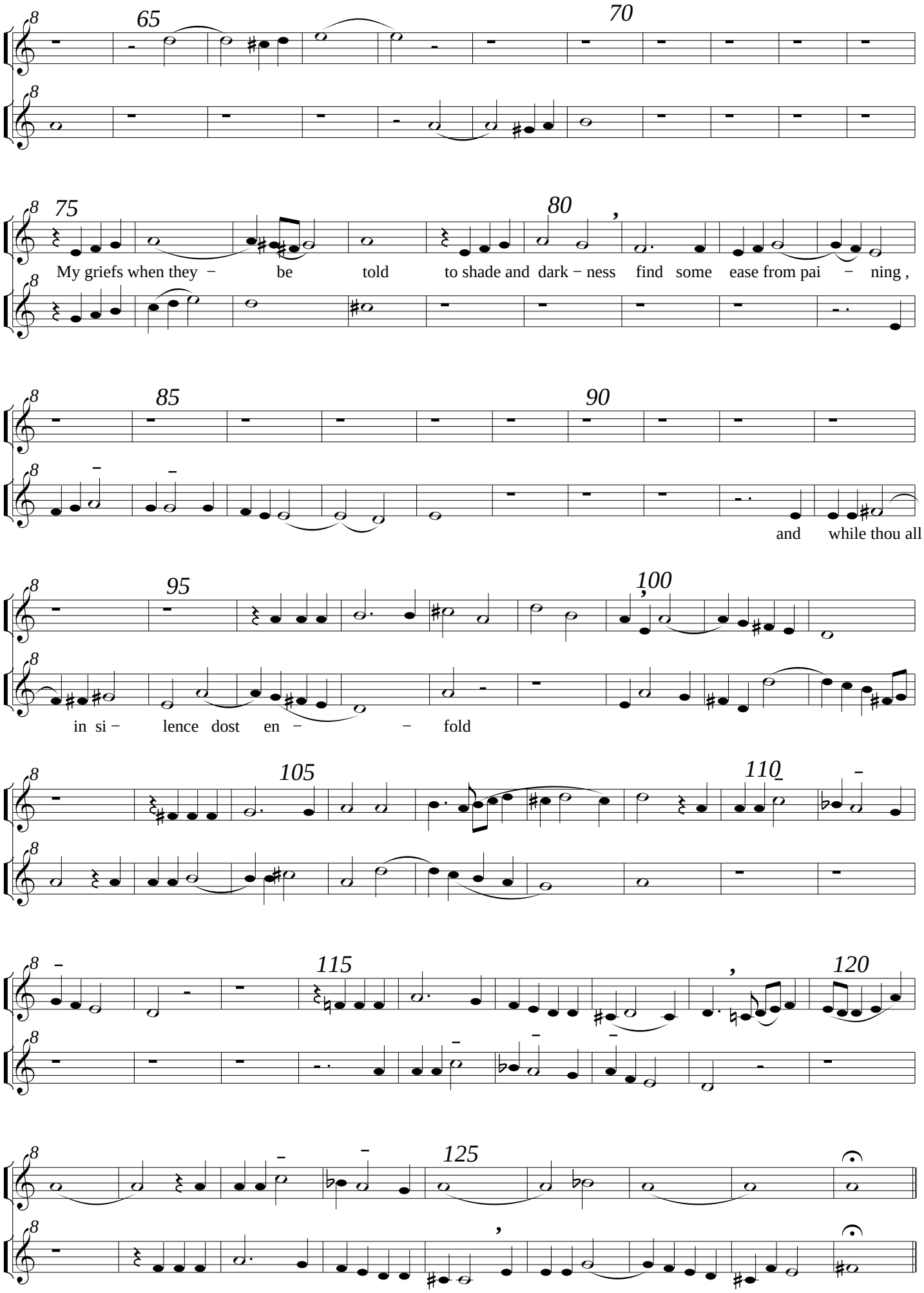
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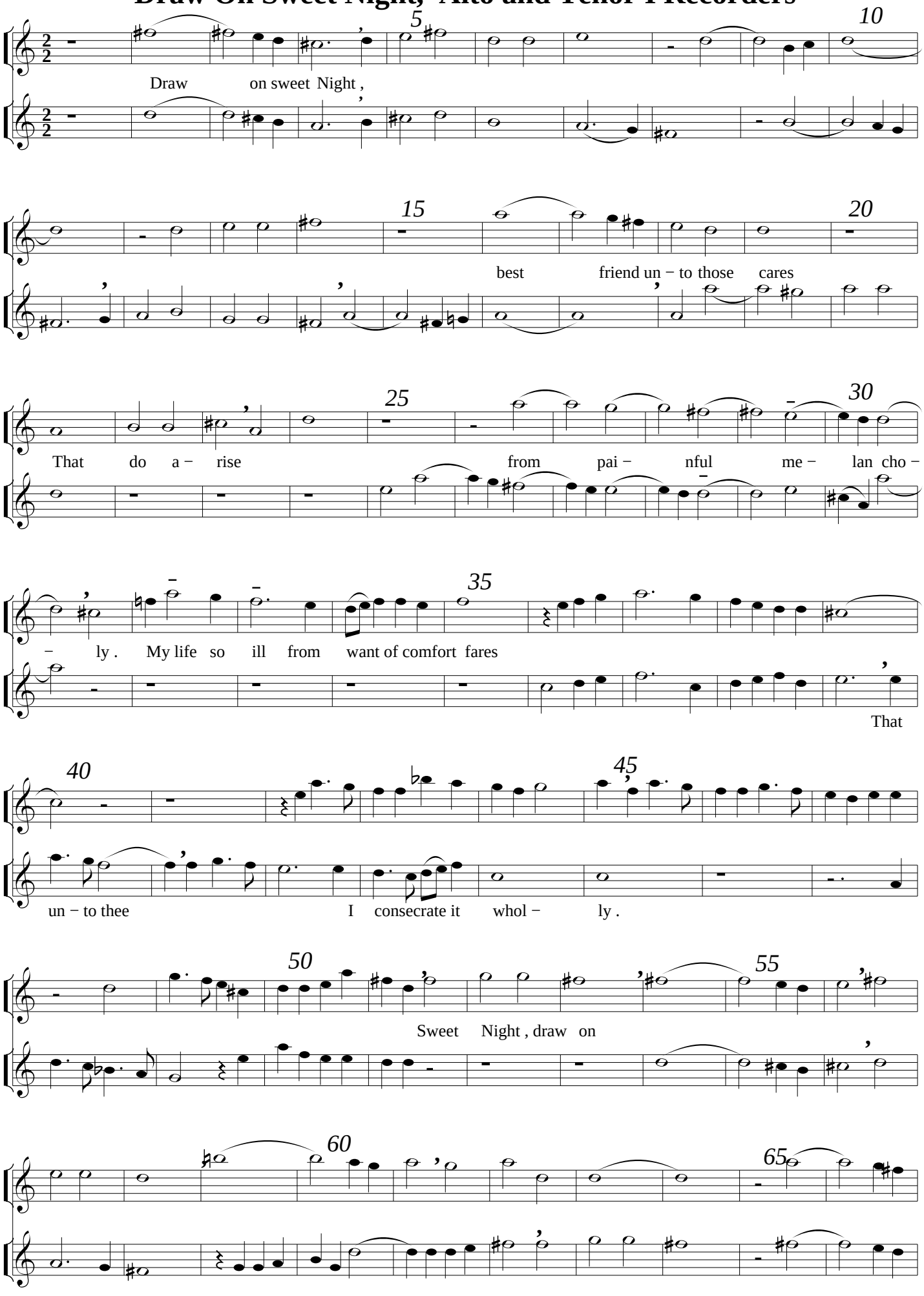
John Wilbye

Draw On Sweet Night, Alto and Tenor I Recorders



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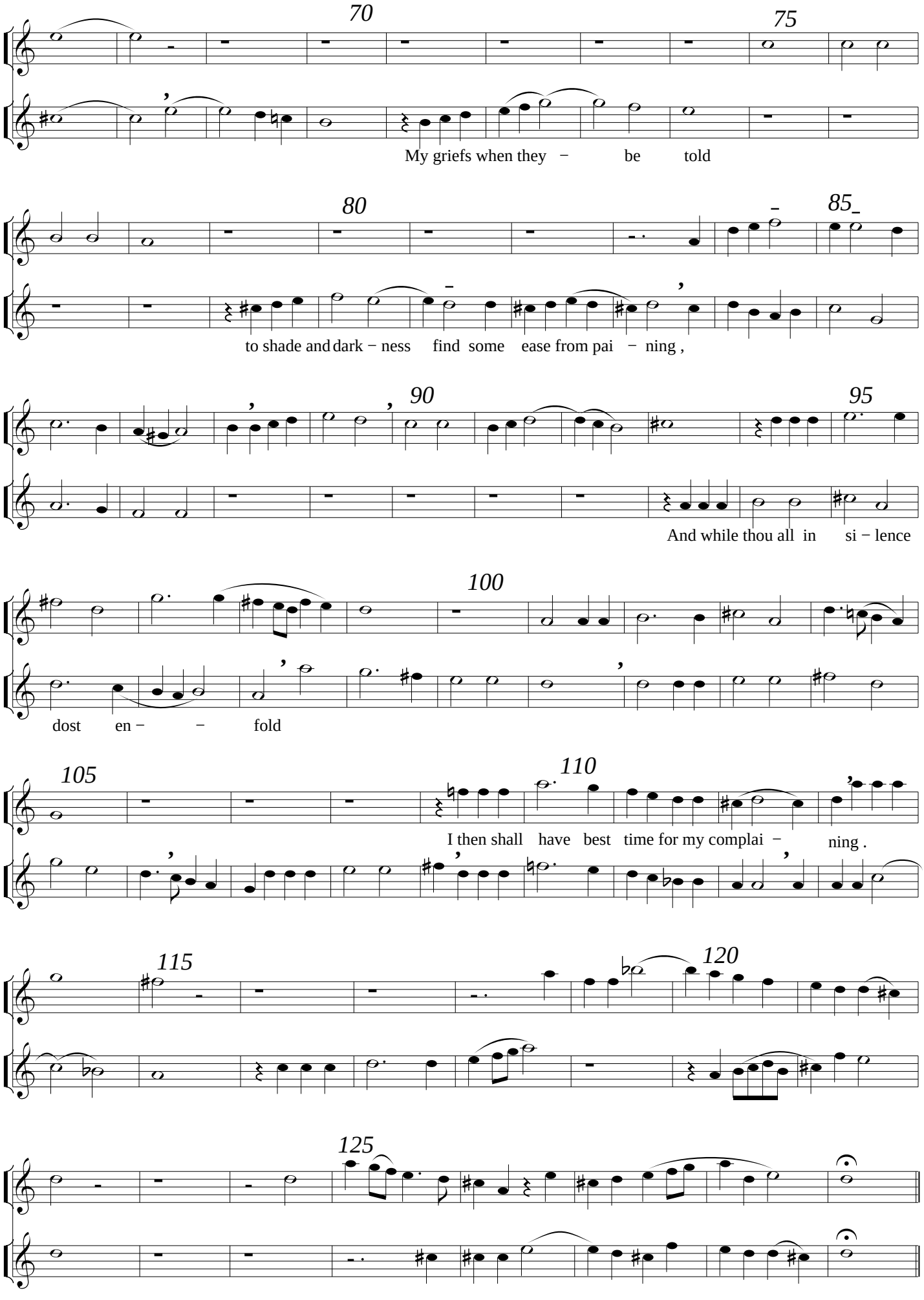
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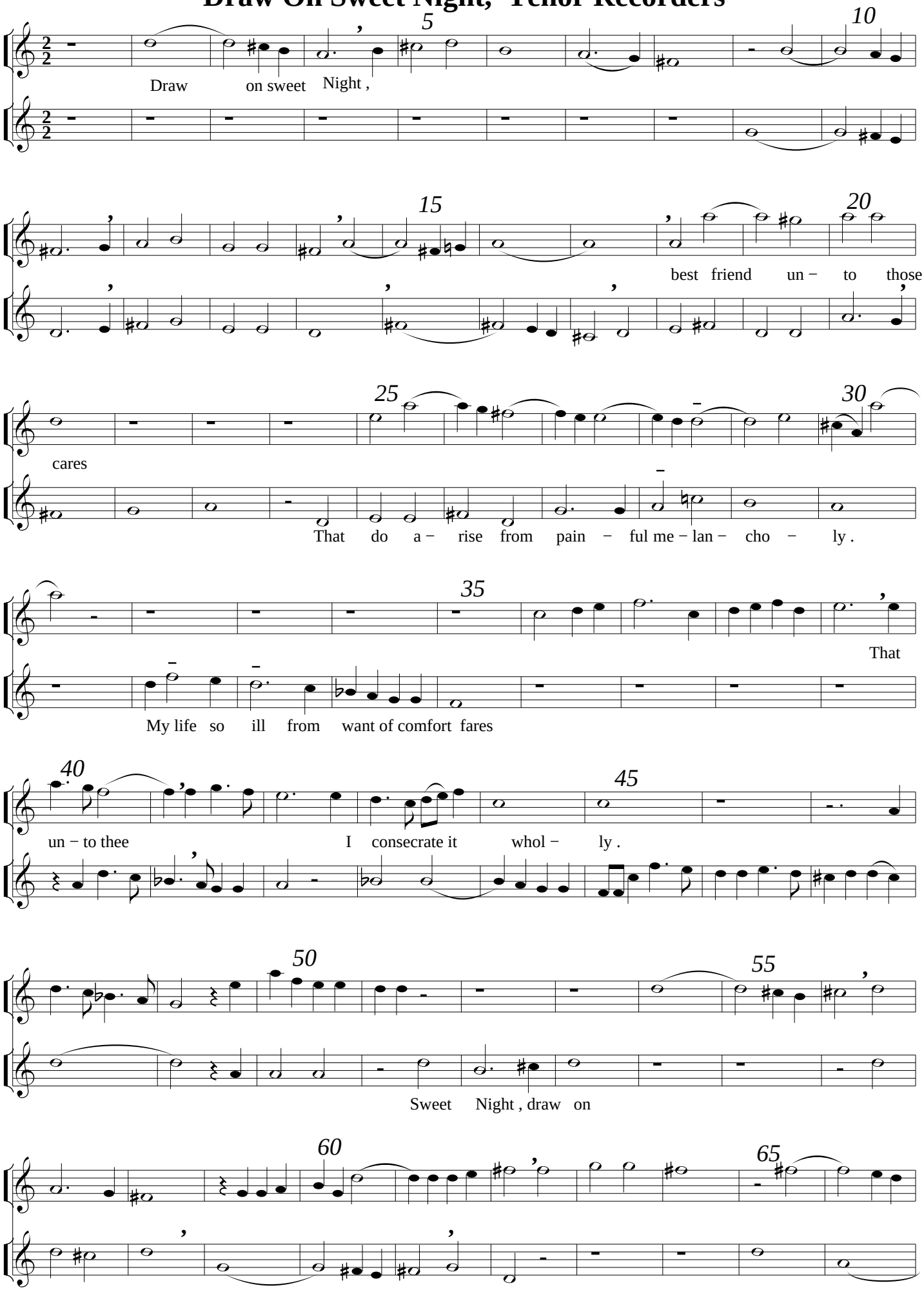
Draw On Sweet Night, Tenor Recorders

John Wilbye



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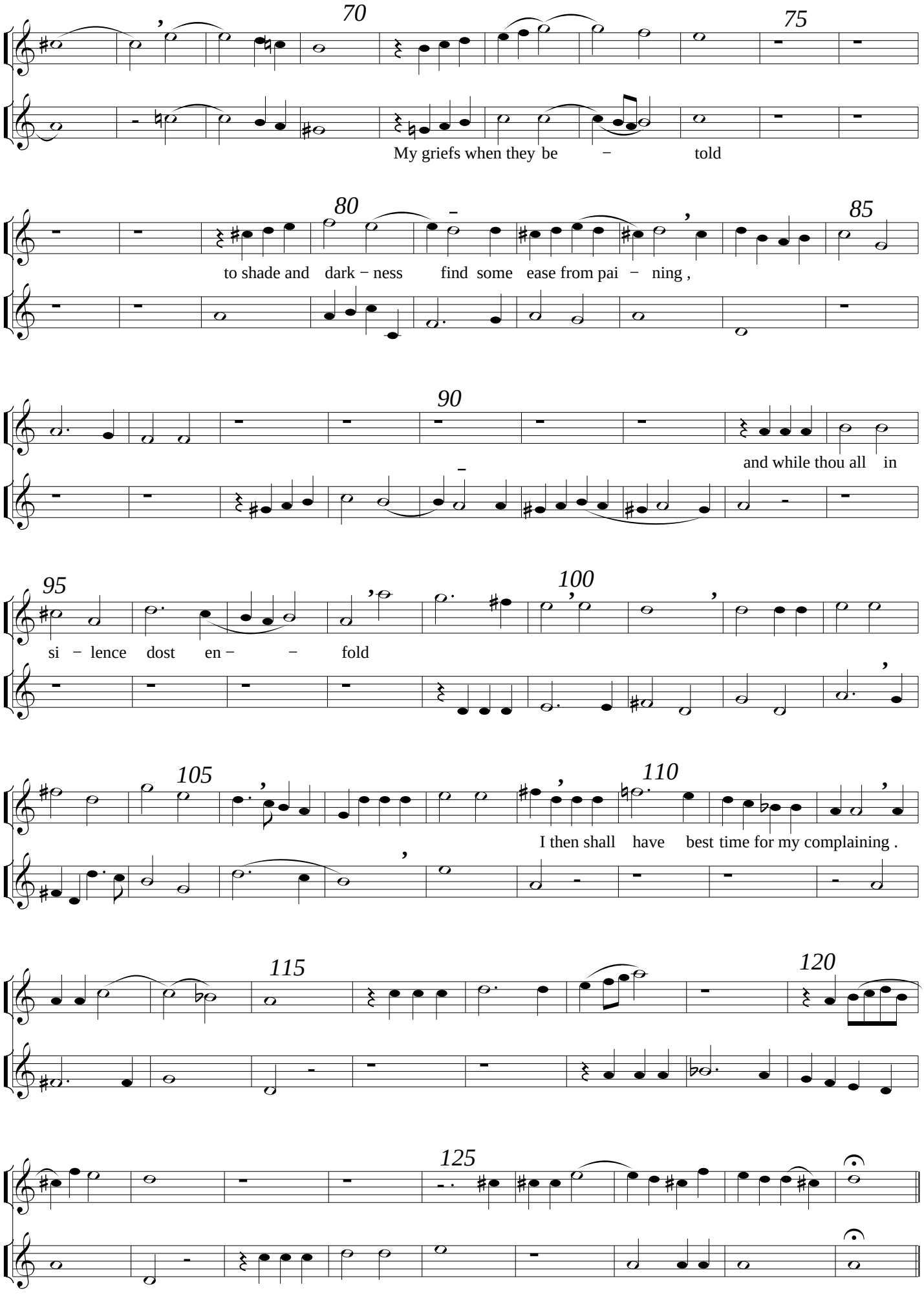
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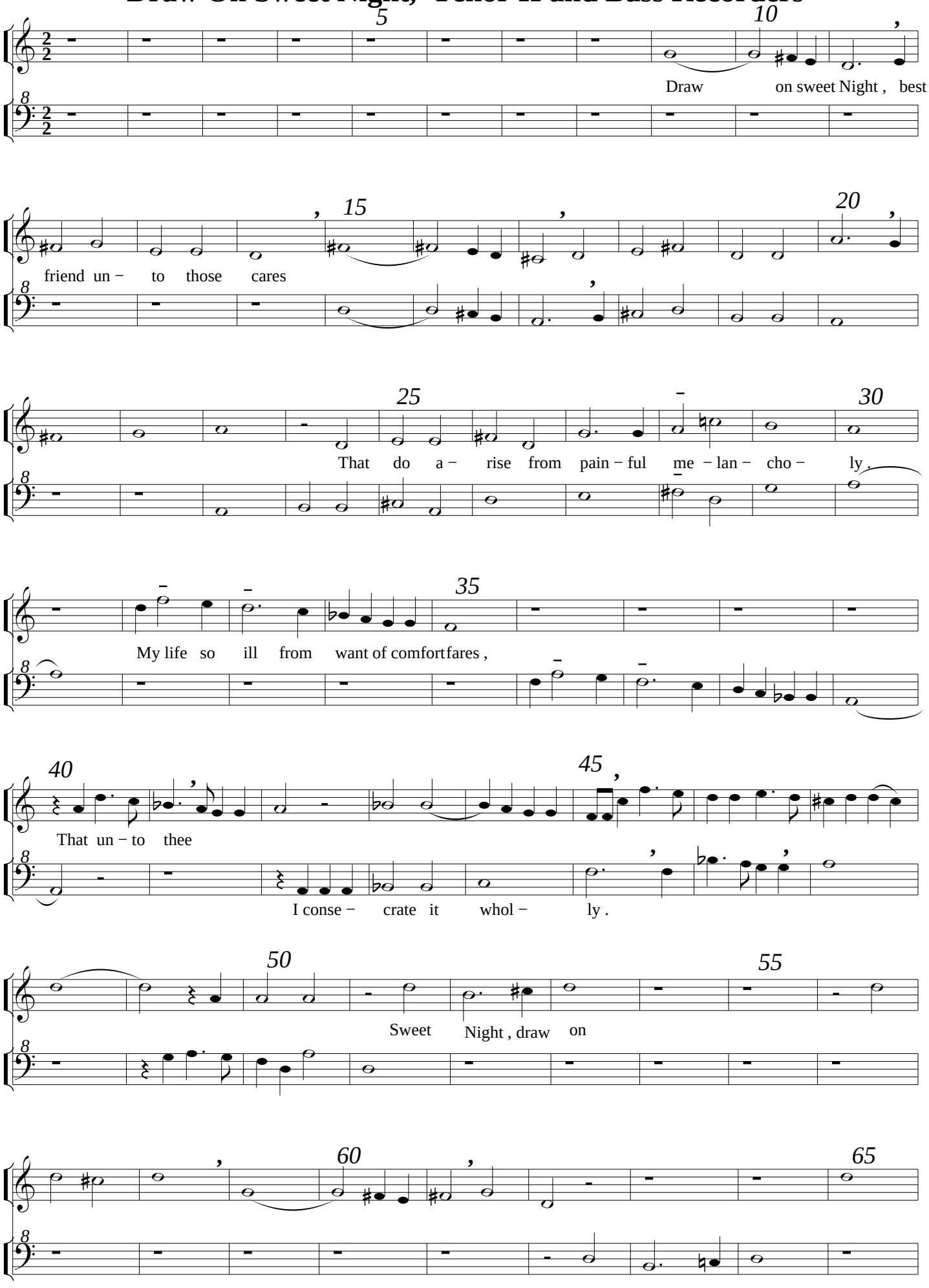
John Wilbye

Draw On Sweet Night, Tenor II and Bass Recorders



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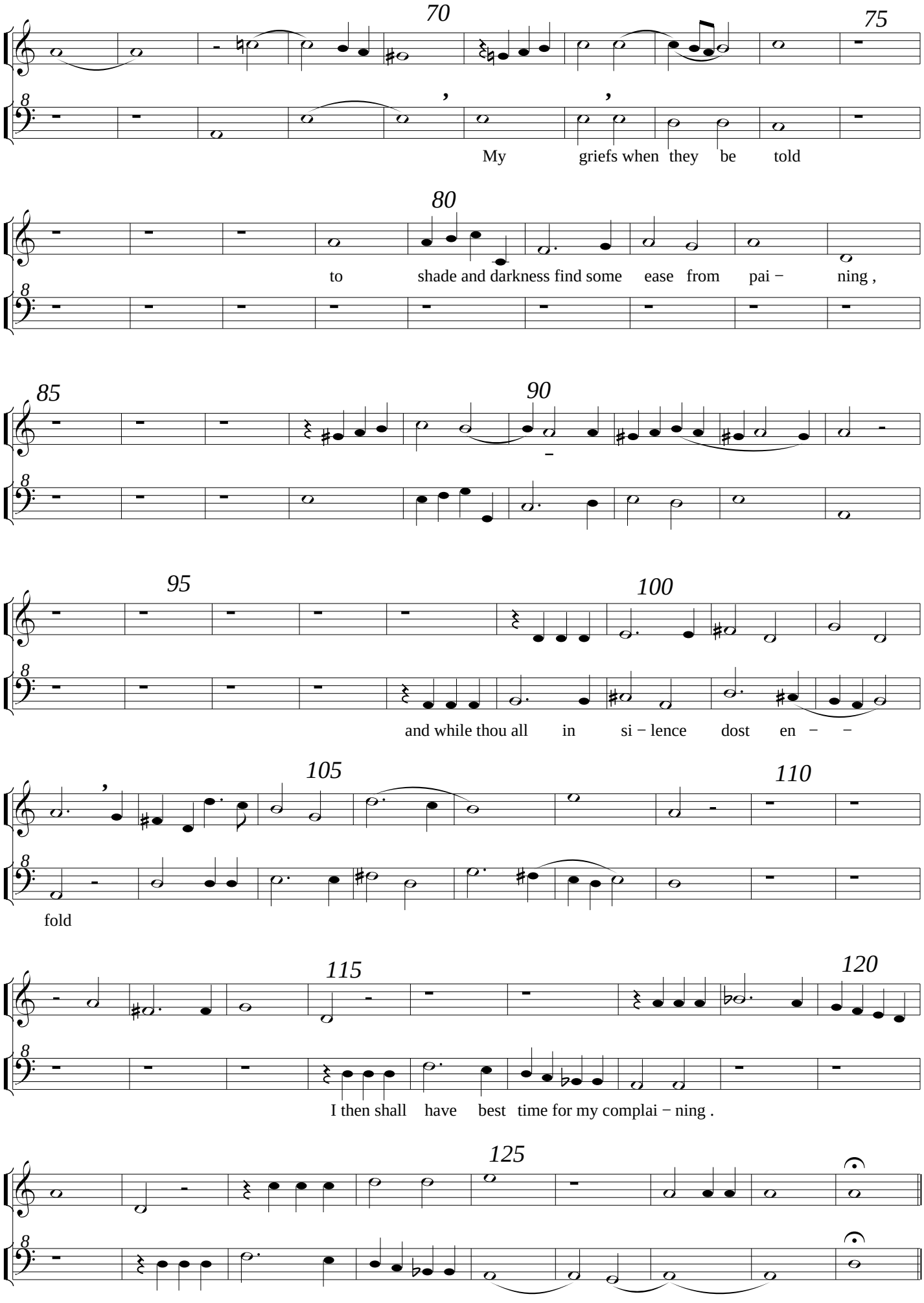
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Peter Billam was born in London in 1948, studied piano, and lived in Switzerland from 1973 to 1983, where he studied composition, classical guitar, flute and voice, worked as Musical Director of the *Théâtre Populaire Romand*, and as recording engineer, record producer and computer programmer. He moved to Tasmania in 1983, lectured in composition at the Conservatorium, conducted recorder ensembles and choirs, studied recorder, voice and harpsichord. He founded **www.pjb.com.au**, becoming the first composer to sell scores on-line, with on-line delivery, taking scores from Composer to Performer in one immediate step. *Www.pjb.com.au* offers a new approach to music publishing. These pieces are **written to be read, made to be played !**

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Arrangements include: By J. S. Bach: *Trio BWV 655*, piano and flute; *Vor deinen Thron BWV 668*, piano; *Fugue in F minor BWV 689*, SATB recorders; *Flute Sonata BWV 1031* transposed into G major for alto recorder and keyboard; *Flute Sonata BWV 1032* completed by Peter Billam for flute and keyboard, also in C major for alto recorder, and in G major for descant; *Ricercare a 3, from the Musikalisches Opfer* for keyboard; *Ricercare a 6*, for sSATBG recorders, or strings, or two keyboards; *Fuga Canonica in Epidiapente* for keyboard and melody instrument; from the *Art of Fugue*: *Contrapuncti 1* and *4* for keyboard, and *Contrapunctus 14* as completed by D. F. Tovey, for keyboard, or for SATB recorders, or for strings; *Passacaglia and Fugue in c* for piano four hands; *Chorales with Descant* for melody instrument and piano; *Cello Suites I*, *II* and *III* for flute or alto recorder, *Forty Chorales* for piano, *Der Geist hilft* for SATB-SATB recorders. By Johannes Brahms: *Fugue in Ab minor for organ*, for SATB recorders and gamba, in A minor; *Choralvorspiele for organ* with previous settings by Isaac, Bach, Praetorius, recorders. By Franz Schubert: *Four Songs*, voice and guitar; *Schubert Dances*, recorders and guitar, *Schubert Dances*, piano 4 hands. By G. F. Händel: *Concerto Grosso in A minor* op 6 no 4, harpsichord and recorders; *Recorder Sonata in Bb* no 5, in G for tenor recorder and keyboard. By other composers: *Claudio Monteverdi, Ecco Mormorar l'Onde*, SSATB recorders; *Twelve Italian Songs*, voice and guitar; *John Wilbye, Draw on sweet Night*, SSATTB recorders, and for flute choir; *Telemann, Twelve Flute Fantasias*, recorder; *John Carr, Divisions on an Italian Ground*, flute or recorder and guitar; *Fourteen Folk Dance Tunes*, recorder and guitar; *Easy Classical Pieces*, Bb trumpet and piano.

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