awake|asleep

for 2 sopranos and piano

j bunch(2010)

Performance notes:

There are no stems/time signatures or other rhythmic indications (in a traditional sense). The performers have the freedom to choose the exact duration and attack point of each note. However, the horizontal order of events must be preserved.

Each note is to be sustained unless there is a “U” shape over the notehead. In such cases the note should be shorter (though never staccato).

A “–“ tenuto marking over a notehead means that it should be sustained, but slightly separated from the pitches around it.

An “x”–shaped notehead specifies the ending point of a note where that ending is specified. It should not be accented or performed in an exaggerated manner.

An arrow pointing down onto a note indicates that that it should be stressed as if it was a “downbeat.”

Vertical dashed lines indicate simultaneity, diagonal dashed lines are there to clarify and suggest phrasing (order of notes/groupings into gestures).

You will note that every measure is bounded by thin double–bars. I have done this to indicate that the performers should consider each measure to be a kind of miniature sonic painting. As such they should be separated from one another by a measure of silence (whose length is determined in performance by the performer who begins the following “painting.” Players should listen to one another to decide when to play/sing their notes. When a note is tied over into the next bar, the performer should continue to sing/play their pitch(es) across the silence that separates one from the next.

Program Notes:

awake|asleep is a bi–textual “motet” for 2 sopranos and piano. The two texts were written by a poet friend of mine for a collaboration project we had embarked upon. I was drawn to these two texts particularly for the striking quality of their words that seemed to be coming from a very similar place but that expressed two very different experiences/sensations. One regards a pair of lovers simply being with one another (yet pointing outside of themselves as it were), and the other, a poem on the edge of the elegiac. I have tried to bring out the dreamlike and liminal state that perhaps these two experiences in a way, share.

Not Quite an Elegy

Outside, as if in some relief, began a cold rain.
Water gathered on the evergreens, collecting
in deep furrows at the top, then slipping
to the next level until the ground received it.

Awake

After so many years
who knows why we were out
lying in the grass under trees.
In light rain sleep came unexpectedly,

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awake/asleep

unhurried

j bunch

always from and to silence

Soprano 1

Out - side as if in some re - lief

always from and to silence

Soprano 2

always very soft

*** break sustain gently
every moment

S 1

be - gan a cold rain wa - ter

S 2

Af - ter

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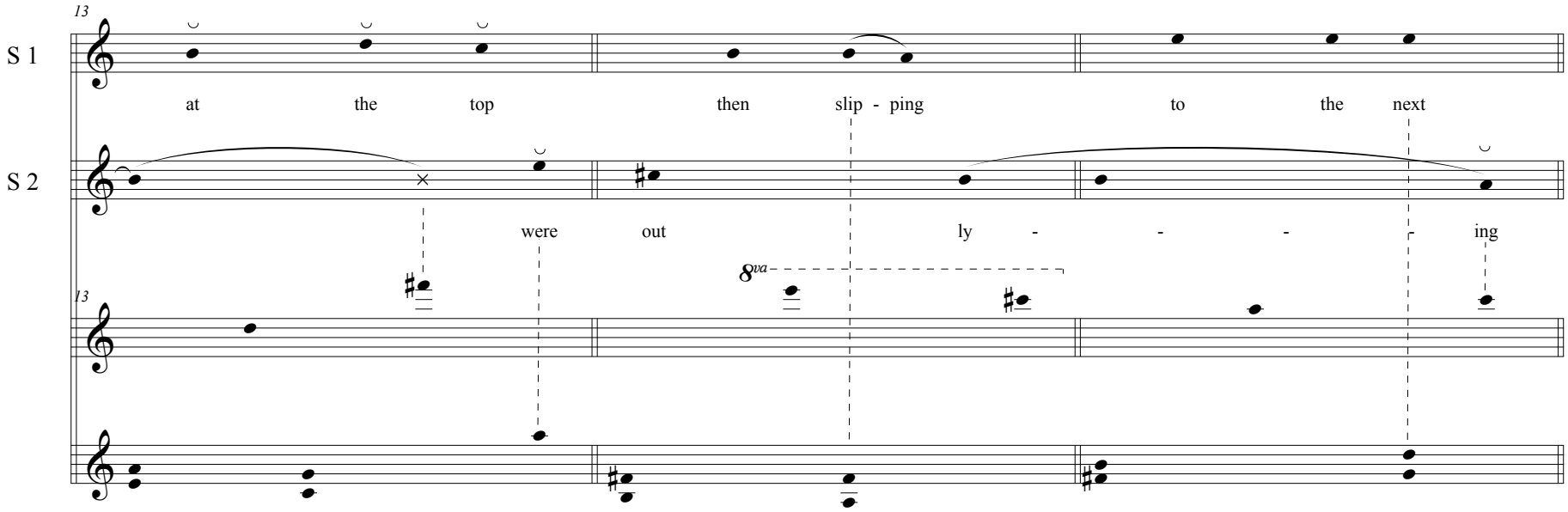
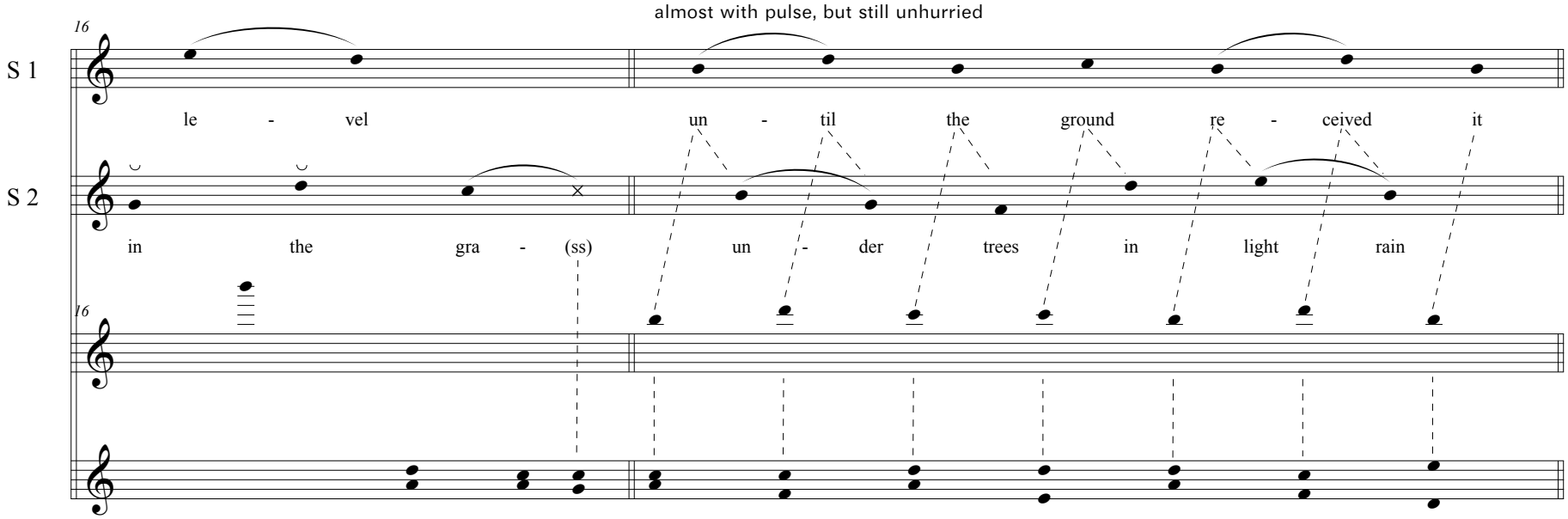
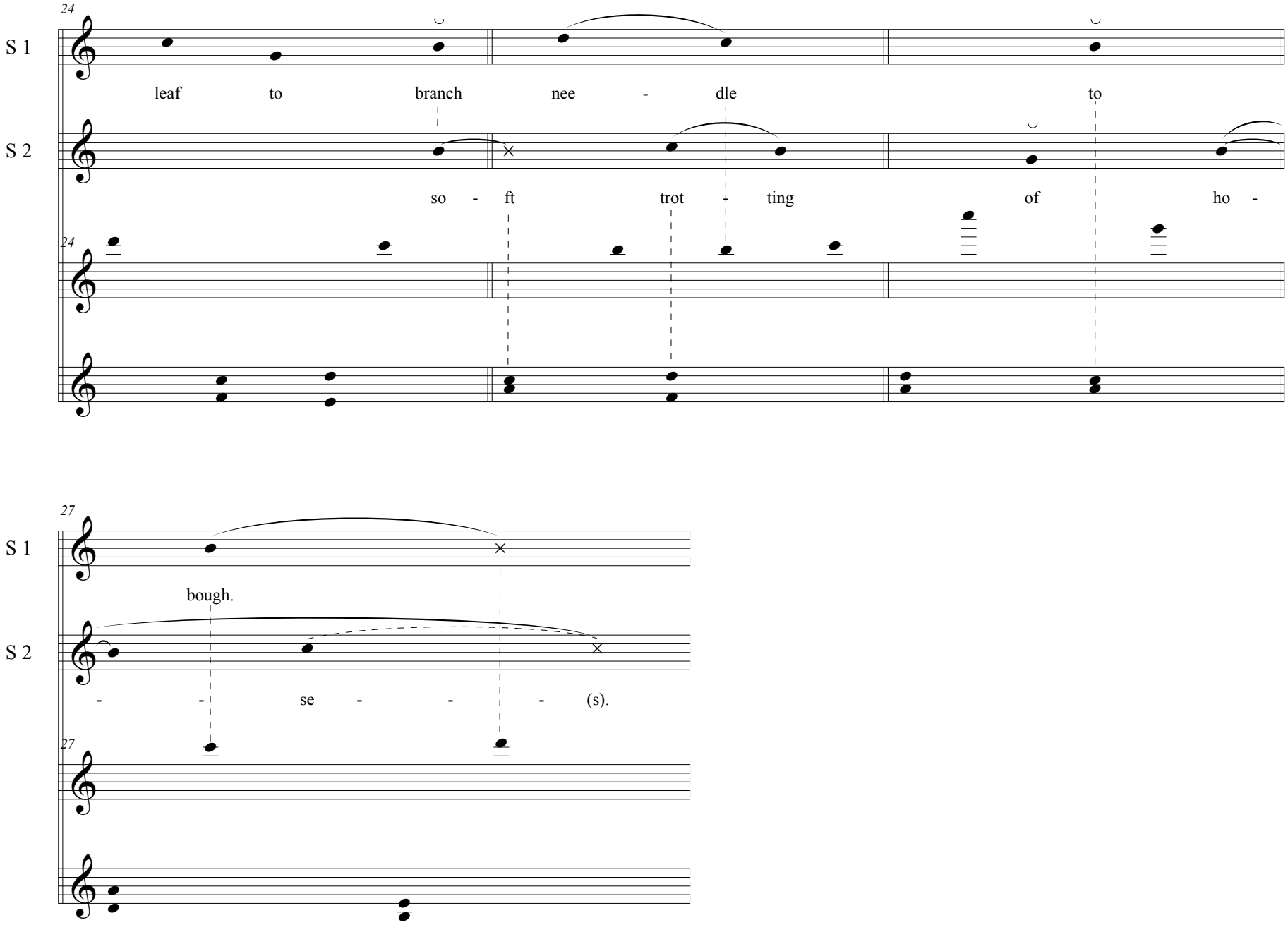
7
S 1
ga - thered on the e - ver - greens
S 2
so ma - ny years
7
10
S 1
coll - ect - ing in deep fur - row - (s)
S 2
who knows why we
10


13
S 1
at the top then slip - ping to the next
S 2
were out ly - - - ing
8va
13


almost with pulse, but still unhurried
16
S 1
le - vel un - til the ground re - ceived it
S 2
in the gra - (ss) un - der trees in light rain
16

18
S 1
the rain had not fal - len
S 2
sle - - - ep came un - ex - pect - ed - ly
18
20
S 1
on - ly a - ssem - bled and spilled down
S 2
we woke on - ly once to the
8va
20


24
S 1
leaf to branch nee - dle to
S 2
so - ft trot - ting of ho -
24
27
S 1
bough.
S 2
- - se - - - (s).
27