

The Sloth and The Moth

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Keep the tempo around $\text{♩} = 180$ even when the number of notes per measure changes; the 6/8 part should be a jig

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It begins in 4/4 time and changes to 6/8 time for a section. The lyrics are: Bra - dy - pus tri - dac - ty - lus, the gree - nish three - toed sloth; Brad - i - po - di - co - la hahn - e - li, the brown com - pan - ion moth. Up in the rain - fo - rest ca - no - py of nor - thern parts of Bra - zil, Bra - dy - pus spends a lot less time mo - ving than it spends hol - ding still. Ha - ving a low bo - dy tem - pera - ture, it does - n't need much to eat; Mam - mals re - qui - ring more e - ner - gy are not a - ble to com - pete. Most of its life - time is spent a - lone, not part of a group or pair. Cy - a - no - der - ma and Tri - cho - phi - lus al - gae grow on its hair: These be - come yel - low in times of drought, though most of the time they're green, Mat - ching the sea - son - al fo - li - age, so Bra - dy - pus can't be seen. Sloth the ge - nus Bra - dy - pus lives in a tree And leaves some fe - ces once a week for a moth called hahn - e - li. Bra - dy - pus ... moth.

Complete words overleaf

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Bradypus tridactylus, the greenish three-toed sloth;
Bradipodocola hahneli, the brown companion moth.

Up in the rainforest canopy of northern parts of Brazil,
Bradypus spends a lot less time moving than it spends holding still.
Having a low body temperature, it doesn't need much to eat;
Mammals requiring more energy are not able to compete.
Most of its lifetime is spent alone, not part of a group or pair.
Cyanoderma and *Trichophilus* algae grow on its hair:
These become yellow in times of drought, though most of the time they're green,
Matching the seasonal foliage, so Bradypus can't be seen.

Bradypus tridactylus, the greenish three-toed sloth;
Bradipodocola hahneli, the brown companion moth.

Deep in the fur of the *Bradypus*, a third of an inch in size,
Bradipodocola hahneli will crawl, though it rarely flies.
Constant abrasion from coarser hairs wears most of the wing away,
Though it was perfectly functional upon the arrival day.
Bloodsucking flies and mosquitoes may take nourishment from the sloth;
They form a hematophagous guild that doesn't include the moth.
It does not chew on the skin or hair, while patiently it just waits
For that event for which every moth emerges, matures, and mates.

Bradypus tridactylus, the greenish three-toed sloth;
Bradipodocola hahneli, the brown companion moth.

Once every week or so, *Bradypus* descends to the forest floor,
Labouring slowly, conserving strength for when it ascends once more.
Digging a hole with its stubby tail, a tool that has little power,
It leaves a pile of feces and is finished in half an hour.
This is an adequate interval for laying of sloth moth eggs:
Larvae will feed on the dung, and then mature to have wings and legs.
Once metamorphosized, they're full grown, and feeding will not occur:
They find a sloth to await their turn, transported within the fur.

Bradypus tridactylus, the greenish three-toed sloth;
Bradipodocola hahneli, the brown companion moth.

Why does the *Bradypus* make this trip, involving such strain and toil?
Scientists speculate it recycles nutrients to the soil.

Under a cover of leaves and dirt, the pile that it shat and peed
Slowly releases its minerals to trees where the sloth can feed.
You have heard plenty of syllables, and if you can't learn them all,
Here is a one-sentence summary you certainly can recall:

This is where the melody changes from 6/8 to 4/4:

Sloth the genus *Bradypus* lives in a tree
And leaves some feces once a week for a moth called *hahneli*.

Bradypus tridactylus, the greenish three-toed sloth;
Bradipodocola hahneli, the brown companion moth.

There are many references to three-toed sloths and their defecatory habits; for information on the moths, see
J. K. Waage and R. C. Best. Arthropod associates of sloths. In G. G. Montgomery (Ed), *The Evolution and Ecology of*
Armadillos, Sloths, and Vermilinguas, Smithsonian Institution Press, 1985, pp. 297-311