

Dancing Toward Bethlehem

If there is only enough time in the final
minutes of the twentieth century for one last dance
I would like to be dancing it slowly with you,

say, in the ballroom of a seaside hotel.
My palm would press into the small of your back
as the past hundred years collapsed into a pile
of mirrors or buttons or frivolous shoes,

just as the floor of the nineteenth century gave way
and disappeared in a red cloud of brick dust.
There will be no time to order another drink
or worry about what was never said,

not with the orchestra sliding into the sea
and all our attention devoted to humming
whatever it was they were playing.

BILLY COLLINS

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