

Festival of Near-Death Experiences

Celebrators carry the living in coffins through tangled streets. The nearly-dead sit up and smile from open caskets, show respect to sister of Lazarus, patron saint of new life, Santa Marta. *Star of the North, we bring you those who saw Death and survived.* Mourners perform grief, the funeral procession follows her figure back to the church where corpses rise again, and the band begins to play. Men and women dance for her under the summer sun, swift but fluid, flesh luminous with sweat. Praise for rust-colored stories and Spanish wine. Praise for those transformed by beauty. Praise for those who arched toward death, but didn't let go.

~Lissy Irions