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