

In Memory Of

Locvizza, September 30, 1916

His name was
Mohammed Sceab.

Descendent
of emirs of nomads
a suicide
because he had no homeland
left

He loved France
and changed his name

He was Marcel
but wasn't French
and no longer knew
how to live
in his people's tent
where you hear the Koran
being chanted
while you savor your coffee

And he didn't know how
to set free
the song
of his desolation

I went with him
and the proprietess of the hotel
where we lived in Paris
from number 5 Rue des Carmes
and old faded alley sloping downhill

He rests
in the graveyard at Ivry
a suburb that always
seems
like the day
a fair breaks down

And perhaps only I

still know
he lived

Giuseppe Ungaretti, translated by Andrew Frisardi