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**Aeneas' Journey in Contemporary Literature**

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# AENEAS' JOURNEY IN CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

**ROMA**

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Translated from Italian by Gavin Williams

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## Aeneas' Journey in Contemporary Literature

### TIZIANO ROSSI, (*NADER A.*) (2000)

The 'immigrant': who, with a cigarette  
and a wary gaze, uproots himself and moves  
to this strange west (this stretch of dripping tar)  
nameless Aeneas: who would sing of this man?

Translated by Todd Portnowitz



To conclude, this journey through literature by Aeneas would not be complete without a contemporary 'portrait' of him in this rapid quartrain by the poet Tiziano Rossi (b. 1935). *Gente di corsa*, winner in the year 2000 of the prestigious Viareggio-Rèpaci prize offers, in snapshots, a collection of aspects of the daily life of simple characters, whose name, sometimes reduced to initials, and occasionally accompanied by a descriptive appellation, appears in the title, in brackets. Against the grey background of large modern city, which could stand for Rome, we home in on a man who has probably come to Italy from the East. This is suggested both by his name, Nader, and by the expression "moves/ to this strange west". His individuality is extinguished in the generic description of "immigrant", and, amid the desolation, he tries to get some comfort smoking a humble cigarette. Having escaped wars and poverty, and arriving as a refugee in a multiethnic society which, however, distrusts a foreigner, he too is yet another incarnation of Aeneas, bereft of glory (and also of a story of his own, almost), and excluded from any form of attention: now a "nameless Aeneas: who would sing of this man?".

Further reading:

- T. Rossi, *Tutte le poesie* (1963-2000), Milano, Garzanti, 2003.
- A. Fo, *Virgilio nei poeti e nel racconto (dal secondo Novecento italiano)*, in *Il classico nella Roma contemporanea: Mito, modelli, memoria*, Atti del convegno (Roma, 18-20 ottobre 2000), a cura di F. Roscetti, L. Lanzetta, L. Cantatore, vol. II, Roma, Istituto di Studi Romani, 2002, pp. 181-239.