



The Lights in Sandwich

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I map Sandwich between two sources of light. To the east, there's Ambassador Bridge with its big, red neon sign and smaller white lights flowing down from it. And to the west, there's the orange, pulsing cloud of light rising from Zug Island next to Detroit. Between them, there is a third, smaller light – a neon art installation on a windmill that says “all we are is all we were” in cursive font. The people of Sandwich live under the influence of these three lights. Sometimes they don't even notice one or two of them; but they're there every night, observing us.

My poems were written under the influence of Sandwich's lights. In the few years that I've lived in Sandwich, I could not avoid the two lights looming over my neighbourhood. When I would walk home from the University in the evening, or when I would head down to one of the many bars on Sandwich Street, my eyes would inevitably meet the orange cloud or the bridge's sign. They just automatically pull your focus to them whenever you look up. And yet, they are not guiding lights. Under the bridge, the barren side of Indian Road feels darker than most other spots. Going west past Mill Street, the orange cloud's presence is, well, ominous at best.

Only the white, neon sign on the windmill provides any sort of comfort – even when it's partially covered by one of the windmill's blades. Maybe it's because the sign speaks directly to the past, present, and future histories of Sandwich Towne and its fluctuating population. Lights go on and off in Sandwich homes just as people move in and out. From my very first few months in Windsor, the sign acted as a reminder of my own circumstances; for a while I've lived in Sandwich, and now Sandwich is part of all that I will be.