Excerpt from

The Tale of the Sarnia Nose (a toxic comic book)

PETER HOBBS

PICTURE THIS: THE FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITY OF AAMMJWNAANG SITS IN THE MIDDLE OF CHEMICAL VALLEY. IN INVOKING A PETROCHEMICAL WILDLIFE TO POWER IT IS IMPORTANT TO FOREGROUND AAMMJWNAANG, TO POINT OUT THAT THIS CHIPPEWA (ANISHINAABE) COMMUNITY OF APPROXIMATELY 850 PEOPLE IS LITERALLY SURROUNDED BY THESE OIL REFINERIES AND PRODUCTION PLANTS.

FOR MANY PEOPLE LIVING IN SARNIA AND ELSEWHERE IN THE SURROUNDING AREA, AAMMJWNAANG IS SIMPLY THE PLACE WITH THE ODD NAME THAT YOU PASS THROUGH AND THAT YOU MIGHT STOP OFF AT TO PURCHASE CHEAP CIGARETTES FROM ONE OF THE SO-CALLED “SMOKE SHACKS” THAT LINE THE PARKWAY.

THIS IS HOW I FIRST LEARNED OF AAMMJWNAANG: IT WAS WHERE JIM WOULD BUY HIS PACKS OF CIGARETTES, WHICH I REMEMBER HAD A GRAPHIC IMAGE OF A TRADITIONAL BRAVE IN A FEATHERED HEADRESS.
The Tale of the Sarnia Nose is one of three comic book chapters that appear in Chemical Intimacies and Toxic Publics, Hobbs' 2016 dissertation. This text mixes archival research, ethnography, and comic book drawings to produce a creative hybrid: part political critique, part environmental activism, and part artist publication.