

Better or Worse

“Happy Pride!”
But instead I’ve got
this picture in my head
of a lonely at-home-alone Joe, aged
13, vacating the claustrophobic
heat & humidity of mid-August
for the cool, below ground-level confines
of our basement in Beaconsfield, where
Jack & Lorraine kept their haphazard
library of random paperback novels
on two shelves built into the wood-panelled
walls, and where I came across
the lurid 1950s-era front cover
of an unlikely *Giovanni’s Room*—
Where the love that dare not speak
its name was secretly breathed out
to me with such riveting beauty
and eloquence, with such a forceful
exactitude that it took me for—

Thanks, dad Jack.
Thank you, mother Lorraine.
For everything and nothing.

Joe L,
2019

Note: This poem is included in “The Dreamer
and the Dreamed.” The City of Beaconsfield,
where the Leahey family home was located, is
a suburb of Montreal, Quebec.