



Winner, Writing Award 2017 for Poetry

Emily Macphail
Class of 2019

Badge of Honour

I've worn
 a lot of badges.
Name tag for this.
 Volunteer pin for that.

And
 at one time
 a hospital band,
 for
far too long.

Like a
 badge of shame.

Then
Lights on at 6am.
 Arm out to the side of the bed.
 "Name?"
 "Date of birth?"
Needle in, blood out.
White paper shackle.

Literal seconds to
 snip
 that paper chain.
Years to break
 the metaphorical mental ones.

Now
Rounding at 6am.
 Holding her arm out at the side of the bed.
 Taking her pulse.
Breathe in, breathe out.
White coat
 and
 identification badge.

Mere moments to

swipe

that passport.

Official enough to allow me

through those formerly exit-less doors.

Grateful

that my hospital identification

now,

with its responsibilities and privileges,

feels...

Like a

badge of honour.