

ERICA WRIGHT

INVENTORY AT FORTY-ONE

We're regular customers at urgent care.
The nurse stocks stickers of dogs and dinos,

remembers that our son is "a train kid."
We don't say that his great-grandfather

was spared the draft because coal
was king, and he a loyal subject, shoveling

the chunks into a furnace hot enough
to melt bone. At eighteen, a kid himself.

We don't say conductor, opting instead
for the choo-choo noise our son can make.

There are a lot of stories left to tell
like the one about Aesculapian snakes,

how they writhed on sickbay floors,
good luck or at least good motivation

to get well and get the hell out of there.
Instead, we greet Mr. Bug in the mornings.

He's a stubborn soldier beetle, living
longer than the cut flowers in our kitchen.