

## Vidalia

They're everywhere and priced  
like gourmet items, but when I first

ate them, no one had ever heard  
of an onion with the name of a town.

In Vidalia, timber barons were kings,  
their wives ordered Christmas

gifts from Neiman Marcus,  
folks knew Georgia towns

if they had been there:

Valdosta,  
girls' basketball champions,

Ossabaw,  
crabs gave themselves

for a string and cheap bait,  
and I could ride the Crescent

from Atlanta to New Orleans,  
houses levitating

above Pontchartrain,  
time as thin as onion skin:

woods, winter morning,  
dog's footfall, the beat, beat,

beat of her herding paws,  
another Christmas, new boots

from Gokey, my own .22,  
silent, air

shot with surrender,  
quail,

quail in the hands  
of those long-legged men.

"Vidalia" first appeared in *Agni*.