

## the nominal bomb

they called it the nominal bomb  
just ten thousand tons of TNT equivalent . . .  
it was the smallest one they could make

in poetry terms it was a slender volume . . .  
one you could tuck into your back pocket  
to read on some bank where wild thyme grows

but God knows . . .  
they were doing their level best  
to build one as big as a Bible

if Maralinga was a place of verse . . .  
Christmas Island was the place of the Bible  
of chapter and verse . . .  
of hellfire . . . brimstone . . . eternal damnation  
it was an eye for an eye . . . a tooth for a tooth . . .  
the slaughter of the innocents . . .

it was the word of God . . .  
and the radiation, even though it dies  
shall rise again . . . and have everlasting life . . .  
and shall dwell in the House of the Lord . . .  
for ever