

the speed of light and sound

Light travels through space at 186,000 miles a second
At ground level, sound travels at 600 miles an hour
60 miles a minute, 1 mile a second

we are thirty miles away . . . wearing dark glasses . . .
facing north . . . towards the bomb
instructions come over a megaphone . . .
when the countdown reaches ten seconds . . . face south . . .
remove sunglasses . . . reflection can blind you . . .

five . . . four . . . three . . . two . . . one . . . we turn to face north . . .
the flash of light has gone and the fireball is forming . . .
rockets fire a cross hatch of smoke lines to monitor shock waves . . .
low on the horizon . . . a blood red mass of flame . . . bruised with darkness . . .
angry . . . malevolent . . . violent . . . bestial . . .
lifts its head into the desert air . . . swelling beyond reason . . .

high over the mulga scrub clouds vaporise . . . sucked into the vortex . . .
the ball grows vast . . . alive . . . expanding with phenomenal power . . .
wild . . . out of control . . . blasting ever wider . . . ever higher . . .
shock waves batter the smoke grid . . .
dust storms burst across the ground for miles . . .
the cloud moves north east towards Alice . . .
our necks ache from looking up . . .