

What is it? II

This task is about making inferences to interpret a poem.

They wash their hands in it.
The salt turns to soap
In their hands. Wearing it
At their wrists, they make bracelets
Of it; it runs in beads
On their jackets. A child's
Plaything? It has hard whips
That it cracks, and knuckles
To pummel you. It scrubs
And scours; it chews rocks
To sand; its embraces
Leave you without breath. Mostly
It is a stomach, where bones,
Wrecks, continents are digested.

Author: R. S.

Thomas

a) What is "it" in line 13?

b) In lines 6 and 7, the poet asks a question, "A child's plaything?"
In your own words, explain the poet's answer to this question.

c) Explain the meaning of the last two lines of the poem.