

# Only one home

It's always useful, we're told,  
To ensure a spare is ready to hand:  
About the house an extra pair  
Of spectacles may come in useful,  
A front door key, or two perhaps,  
Concealed for emergency use;  
These things are simply prudent, signs  
Of a cautious mentality, of planning ahead  
For the unexpected, the contingency  
We never thought would come about;  
And yet there are some important things,  
Of which we may possess only one:  
Each of us has only one heart, one life,  
One memory in which to lodge the remembrance  
Of the things we know and love;  
These are private and individual limitations;  
Singularity applies, though, just as much  
To that which belong to all:  
We have only one home, one planet,  
One earth on which each of us may sit down  
And speak of and treat as our own:  
Only one, irreplaceable, unduplicated  
By a spare earth somewhere else;  
Just this one, this one we love.  
And that, perhaps, is what we might  
Tell ourselves as we look upon it  
With a lover's eyes, this precious place,  
Source of all meaning to us,  
Site of all that we've ever known.  
Ever felt, or ever dreamed about,  
This spinning place, green and blue.  
Shrouded at times by cloud, made golden  
By sunsets that make us want to cry;  
This is the only one we have;  
This is the one that we must cherish,  
Distinctive in the light of our individual moods  
And different ways of looking at things,  
Yet equally dear, equally nourishing,  
Equally in need of our stewardship  
Now, as never before; our only home.

— Alexander McCall Smith