Dedicated to Sister Margaret Ledwith, 
chaplain at Medical Center Hospital Odessa

Hot, dusty, barren, the endless incline climbs the mountain
Stifling warm air fills lungs, inhale, exhale, fatigue setting in
Unexpected, a small burst of color from the desert trail
A little flower beckons a rest, and a closer look
Red velvety petals contrast with the harsh, sharp rock
Pondering sudden refreshment, and new strength
Who placed it there to renew the weary?
Moving on, I consider the mountain paintbrush

Cold, clean, sterile, the white corridors traverse the hospital
Ventilator oxygen fills lungs, inhale, exhale, prognosis is grim
Suddenly, a rosy smile between the flickering monitors
Irish brogue speaks concern and comfort together
Warm hands folded contrast with cold technology
Renewed and encouraged the family arises
Who placed her there to console the grieving?
Turning away, I consider God’s paintbrush

Craig Daniel, M.D.

Dr. Daniel (AΩA, University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, 1986) is in practice in general and trauma surgery, and is medical director of Trauma Services at Medical Center Hospital in Odessa, Texas. The photograph of the mountain paintbrush was taken by Dr. Daniel. His address is: Medical Center Hospital, P.O. Box 7239, Odessa, Texas 79760. E-mail: cdaniel@echd.org.