

PRAYER LIST

I thought I'd check my list today
of those for whom I need to pray—
my family, my friends, my mate,
and all who face a fearful fate—
for praying's free and won't reduce
the store of grace it scatters loose.

Before I was an older chap,
I thought such lists a needless trap
that fostered guilt, if rushed or missed:
just one more legalistic twist
to burden spontaneity
in saintly quests for piety.

“Just let the Spirit lead!” I said,
and so He would, when I was led
to listen to His quiet voice.
But circumstance can hinder choice.
Today my aging mind forgets
to pray petition's proper debts.

So prayer lists have become my tools,
not to be shunned as lifeless rules,
but memoranda for my brain,
a railroad track to guide my train
of supplication I should send
for mate and family and friend.

— *David L. Hatton, 5/7/2016*