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Let Him Go

by Georg Aeberhard



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You know facebook, don't you? Or are you one of those who would never put themselves public, collecting friends? One of those who warn the others: "Life is too short to read every mental fart by too many people. It is like the black hole: sucks you up and sucks you dry!"

I am a moderate user. I have about a dozen friends I care about, and about as many other men and women I am curious about. Among those real friends I have one who has almost 4 000 friends and there are some with just a few, less than I have.

You are on the facebook? You are in the net? Then you will understand the story I wish to share with you. I have also a few people who wish to be befriended but I refuse, and then there those suggested by the administrator: in that upper right corner where it says "People You May Know", and with whom you are supposed to have a mutual friend. In my case, the frequently occurring suggested person is – or rather was – my bookkeeper and tax adviser I used to see about twice a year. A man of grand stature but humble appearing I always liked to see.

After leaving my old country, we lost contact until he has started to show up as the "You May Know" on my facebook page. He presents himself standing upright against the sky and seem to be waving at us. On a second look you realize that he is not waving but he holds about two feet long fish on a string in front of his body which you miss at the first glimpse (the photograph is about half an inch by half an inch). Well, he kept waving at me for so many times I had to find out more about him and asking around I was told "second hand" that he died because of lung cancer already some time ago. Upon this rumor I contacted the "mutual friend" and asked if J. is alive or if he is in the heaven waving from there to follow him. He replied instantly: "Unfortunately, it is more than a year since J. has died." J. has died but he still is moving around in the net. "Let him go!" I would like to scream at the net manager, "Let him go!" But probably, not having a password – which he apparently did not leave with his son nor his wife – he is doomed to stay with us for ever, caught in the social net like the fish he is holding on the string.