

Intelligent Life

Had I been that clear-as-the-morning
dolphin mere yards from those
nose-down shell seekers cramming
baggies with the last earthly remains
of lightning whelks, calico scallops,
fighting conch and random ocean debris,

I'd have performed a tail stand, shouting:
“Hey, here I am, *Tursiops truncatus*,
your friendly and intelligent bottlenose
dolphin, in the flesh, a shell's throw away!”

While I committed dolphin memories
to my camera phone, the beachcombers
grubbed sand—till some kid cried “shark!”
toward the well-intentioned dorsal fin.

Did I hear that dolphin say “good grief!”
as it set its course out to sea,
leaving our myopic species behind?

—Darrell Petska