Flycatchers

A pair of great-crested flycatchers
smacked our window.

One lay quietly on its back,
wings neatly folded.

The other opened and closed
its beak, chest heaving.

There was no blood, just
a pantomime of calm and agony.

I took one to an ornithologist.
The other, after twenty minutes,

flew away, having collided just below
the threshold that doomed its partner.

One now lies in a museum drawer.
The other swoops over the pond

catching grasshoppers and dragonflies
and flashing its lemon-yellow belly.
Action Adventure Promo

It looks like one of those movies where the men are constantly doing stuff, dragging cannons across beaches, breaking through castle gates while shouting and flailing swords, invading each other’s personal space to make schoolyard threats in husky voices, pulling oars, leaping from ships’ rigging, dying in a dozen spectacular ways. Meanwhile, when they are not being dragged hither and yon, seized, shaken and embraced like rag dolls, the women gaze silently over their shoulders, little tears running down their cheeks at all this poofy-sleeved foolishness, wishing they had been cast in a story where men could relax on a couch and talk, walk companionably down a path of fallen leaves, and sometimes read a book all Sunday afternoon.