REVIEW

Nymphéas, by Marie-Hélène Lafon

by Nicolas Becard

October 25, 2026 · On *Nymphéas (Buchet/Chastel)*

Standing before Monet's Water Lilies at the Musée de l'Orangerie, Marie-Hélène Lafon writes a short, 23-page text, sensual and poetic.



When Marie-Hélène Lafon lies down before the Water Lilies.

On December 29, 2025, as part of its series of musical readings "L'écho des Nymphéas," the Musée de l'Orangerie offered Marie-Hélène Lafon a rare one-on-one encounter with Claude Monet's monumental work.

From that encounter came a short text of 23 pages, published by Buchet/Chastel.

Of the two rooms devoted to the work, the author instinctively heads for the second, "the twilight one." A physical pull toward colors that seem more restrained, less in bloom, downier and more secret. That time of misunderstanding, of the not-quite-arrived, between dog and wolf.

Faced with such grandeur, this author worthy of Giono, worthy of María Borrély, shrinks from no gymnastics: standing, crouching, lying in this den to better grasp, to tame the perspectives and enter the canvas.

Fingertips tingling, the urge to defy the rules is there: to stroke the velvet of the purples, the expected greens and blues, the insolent yellow, the museum's trust held in check.

Then the painterly magic begins to dawn, bringing its share of memories. Lying down calls up the memory of her father napping in that same fitting horizontality.

A small format, perfect for facing the monotony as it shows its grays: armed, poetry in your pocket.

Marie-Hélène Lafon performed this text on March 30, 2026, accompanied by Maëva Le Berre on cello.

— Nicolas Becard

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