

Muriel Maufroy
Rumi's Daughter
ISBN 9781 8441 3583 7
Rider - Ebury, 2005, £6.99

Rumi is the name by which Jalal ud Din is commonly known, the poet and mystic best known as founder of the Whirling Dervishes. The girl Kimya is real too but little is known of her, except that she came from the country to live with Rumi's family in Konya and was graced with mystical experiences.

The book is a novel set in Anatolia in the first half of the thirteenth century, when Islam and Christianity met and mixed on friendly terms. But Mongol pressure was pushing Islam further West and Christianity was declining as Byzantine influence grew weaker.

We first meet Kimya at the age of seven, already given to mystic trances or 'absences' that worry her parents in their remote rural community. Her mother is Christian and there is a little church served from time to time by an old and much-loved priest. Her father is a Muslim, and we are told that Muslim worship was at first held in part of the church.

Much is speculation, but the background is authentic. The accounts of mystical experiences, often linked to the beauties of nature, are not merely charming themselves but have a depth of truth to them, and this is what makes this book both attractive and worthwhile.

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