Red Raspberry Leaves

by Janice Marsh-Prelesnik

Yesterday I picked raspberry leaves just for you,
There were ripe raspberries too—
The red, womb fruits didn’t make it into my basket.
I wanted to enjoy the blood-dripping juicy prize,
While I endured the scratching poking thorns.
Of the wild and unyielding brambles.

The mosquitoes liked to carry me away!
They didn’t care about the hot summer sun.
They came in waves—
Buzzing, piercing, sucking...
But they couldn’t stop me from gatherin’ the
Red raspberry leaves just for you.

I really didn’t want to go gather leaves today,
But I knew this was the right time—the ripe time.
This was the day to harvest
Whether I wanted to or not.
Nature doesn’t care what a human wants.
She speaks and commands,
“Get over here and get the job done.”

I learned how to carry on—how to get a job done,
Through heat, pain and torment,
By giving birth myself.
The red raspberry leaf tea my midwife gave to me
Was bitter and sweet at the same time.
And helped my body remember...

I learned how to be strong,
From my farmin’ Granny saying
“Givin’ birth is a day off from work.”
And now I share the red raspberry leaves with you.
I know that you too will find your strength to endure, to carry on,
Because that succulent berry is a prize worth struggling for.

Janice Marsh-Prelesnik has practiced and taught traditional midwifery, massage therapy and herbalism since 1981. She has four homebirthed, home-schooled children and lives in rural southwest Michigan near Kalamazoo. Janice loves to watch her students grow, develop their intuition and integrate midwifery and the natural healing arts into their lifestyles. During the summertime Janice can be found in her organic gardens preparing herbal remedies for her business, Granny Janny Herbs.