

Us, Being Jennifer

Alan Mills

From the steel rack
I take the jacket: brown, tan and red,
made from
Navajo
scraps of Navajo
rugs like the one that hung on
my wall. I hold my rug and buy
my
jacket and wear it out.

I walk across
campus and I see a coach selling
tickets
for Bingo.
I hold up my rug.
"Bingo is an offensive
word," I scream. "I know this because
I'm...
...I am a Navajo."

I reach Building
Fifteen and I find your door and you
open
it and stand
there in a scarlet
robe looking sick but smiling.
You love my jacket and my rug.
You
ask if you can follow

me to where I
am going and as we start across
the lawn,
you stop in
front of an oval
pond. You lean forward and fall
like in Nestea commercials only
face
first into the rich green

algae and you
gripe through the green thickness, writhing like
Hamlet's
Ophelia,
and Joy comes and helps

pull you out and we go on.
We talk about English lit. and
you
say Margaret Atwood is

the only good
heterosexual female
writer
alive, but
Joy says, "What about
Denise Levertov?" But, you
just stop and fall to your knees in
prayer
because some students are

walking behind
us and they are intruding on our
private
dialogue.
When they are gone you
get up and we continue
with our conversation until
we
meet with Judy and Sue.

I show the rug
to them and I model the jacket.
I spin
like Barbie,
Ballerina Bar-
bie. I dance with the jacket
on me, twirling brown, tan and red.
But,
you all just look away.

I lift the rug.
I raise the Navajo like a flag
and say,
"Don't you see?"
Sue only says, "Why
did you bring that?" and you look
back at Building Fifteen like you
don't
know. Jen, I thought you knew.