

# Buck, naked

*by* Frank Dahai

Buck, naked, has no words. The best he can manage is a dopey strangulated cough. His wife, who is clothed, stands before him, next to a mattress that took Buck half a day to force into the trailer.

'Make a ...'

'Please,' says Buck.

'...mischievous face. A mischievous little boy face.'

Buck tilts his head and angles his eyes, aiming for insouciance.

'No.' says his wife.

Buck thinks mischievous. Imagines stealing a biscuit. Then a van load of biscuits. Then a van driven by a crazy-naked mermaid, breaking the speed limit, Buck leaning out the window, waving his Stetson, screaming like a cowboy that just found god.

'Yes, that's it!'

She pushes down hard on the Polaroid. It snaps and whirs, spitting Buck out onto a small square of emulsion. She takes it, stares at it, and pins it on the notice board next to all the rest: Buck, angry. Buck, unhappy over a lost balloon. Pleasantly surprised. Caught in the zipper. Caught in the act. Caught again and again and again, over and over, ad infinitum.

