MONDAY: AMERICAN MOUTH

In this roundup: Volkswagen vacillations, disappointments a la Colombia, UK, Hungary (and don't forget Poland!), anthropocene extinction, and maybe a straggling bit at the end to get this Monday on the road.

Today's featured musician is Sam Beam, who performs under the stage name *Iron & Wine*. He's a long-time songwriter whose *oeuvre* falls somewhere between folk and indie rock. Its spareness is successor to grunge, mellow good-humored maturity without the youthful driving angst. You may have heard his work before in TV and film – like Flightless Bird, American Mouth circa 2007. The video embedded here features one of my favorites, Tree By The River, though I prefer the performance of the same song in this video (at 9:43). You can catch Beam's more recent work, Love Letter for Fire, with singer Jesca Hoop at this link to the entire album.

Volkswagen de-volking

- VW doesn't want US to release documents to EU (Reuters) – Bosch, manufacturer of the fraudulently programmed electronic control unit which defeated emissions standards, also doesn't want EU investors and vehicle owners to get their hands on the 20 million documents produced for the the U.S. government suit against Volkswagen. Yeah, no. Wonder where the German government stands on document request?

- 66% of 2.0L passenger diesel owners in U.S. signed up for settlement (USA Today) – That's a lot of buy-outs. Only ~3,300 opted out of the deal altogether. The remaining vehicle owners can still take advantage of the proposed vehicle fix – but good luck with resale on those beasts.
- VW offered $1.2B to car dealers as settlement (Bloomberg) – IMO, this was light; this could have cost VW a lot more considering how much damage Dieselgate has done to dealers' brands. Offer is subject to approval by federal court.
- First, Audi tech officer Stefan Knirsch suspended (AutoNews) – If you're going to say something clearly false on the record to media, you deserve a whack for it. This is just plain stupid:

  > "We don't have the four-eye principle, it's more like the six- or eight-eye principle," he said. "That is a very normal reaction once you've undergone something like this. And, we are extending this beyond the exhaust emissions issue by looking at every software process in r&d within the entire company. We are taking

> preventive measures to make sure something like this cannot happen again."

- Then Audi tech officer Knirsch stepped down (Forbes) – 'Defenestration', they called it, but they say organized labor gave Knirsch the much-deserved push out the window (I do love that word 'defenestration'), having prevaricated about his role in the emissions defeat technology's implementation.
- Now Audi chief to be questioned (Autocar-UK) – Rupert Stadler, who became Audi's chairman and CEO in January 2010, has known about the emissions defeat technology in the 3.0L passenger diesel since shortly after he was named to his role. That's four years of doing nothing to stop the defeat before independent research discovered it, and another year-plus before the EPA took action.
- But Audi chief already in hot water over $14K beer party (Bild am Sonntag) – Um. What? He spent that much money when the company

needed to pony up BILLIONS for settlements, recalls, and repairs? VW told him it's on him, out of his own pocket. Sure sounds like VW Group's culture needs a reset.

- Dieselgate will be done by end of year, thinks VW's CEO (Road and Track) – Dude's delusional or just making shit up for the media. Their U.S. engineer won't be sentenced until January, and they still don't have a 3.0L engine fix, let alone a complete deal to offer the owners of those vehicles.
- Meanwhile, Volkswagen thinks electric cars will help us forget all about Dieselgate (The Verge) – Sure. I'll jump right into a VW programmed by these guys. Forget about it.

Disappointing democracy

- Black Monday: As many as 6 million Polish women protest against abortion law (France 24) – Poland's conservative Law and Justice (PiS) party wants to enact a ban on all abortions; Poland already has strict anti-abortion laws, permitting terminations only in the

case of rape, fetal deformity, or pregnancy threatens the mother's life. Women modeled a 1975 Icelandic women's strike, wearing black to mark the death of their rights.

- Colombia's low voter turnout may have undermined peace agreement with FARC rebels (Deutsche Welle) – Sub-40 percent turnout for the historic vote on an agreement between Colombia's government and FARC lead to an unexpected defeat. Colombia's ex-president Uribe campaigned against the agreement as it did not hold FARC accountable for past violence. FARC says it will work with the Colombian government to salvage the agreement.
- UK's PM May indicates focus on immigration limits over market exit (Guardian) – Yeah, double down on racism and nationalism by focusing on limits of free movement by (non-white) people. I'm sure that this will help UK's economy. Meanwhile, banks like Royal Bank of Canada focus on 'smexit' and sterling drops to lowest level since the week after

the referendum.
- Bright spot: Hungary's referendum on refugee limits fails (Der Spiegel) – Another case of low voter turnout has a better ending; not enough voters turned out to make referendum limiting the number of refugees legitimate.

Extinction level events every day

- Native Hawaiian bees now endangered species along with 48 other local plants and animals (Maui Time) – It'd be nice if neonicotinoids were banned before any more pollinators became endangered. It's not like we have alternatives to pollinated crops.
- Lone Rabbs' fringed tree frog dies (Scientific American) – The species once found in Panama may have been wiped out by a fungal infection. This sole specimen had been rescued from its Central American home nearly a decade ago. The species is now believed extinct.
- Sixth mass extinction under way may kill large marine animals first (Los Angeles Times) – Large sea creatures

> may be the most obvious losses, but the extinction of Rabbs' tree frog shows small animal species are already taking the brunt of the anthropocene's deadly force. Human's impact on the environment launched a mass extinction unlike others documented in fossil records.

Longwatch: Blockchain technology

Digital Catapult and Furtherfield produced a video overview of blockchain technology and its potential use. It's not a very long video – less than 7:50 long – but it provides a brief explanation of the technology's purpose while expressing some fundamental concerns about blockchain's development. The homogeneity of developers, for example, is a legitimate concern; a lack of diverse thought in development of other software+hardware technology has cost society enormous amounts of productivity while excluding already marginalized populations. A value-transfer system recognized by democratic governments should minimize opportunity costs while protecting interests of all citizens who rely on such a system.

Tuesday's breathing down our necks…and it'll be trash day. What a coincidence. See you then.