The Gesture of Speaking

In the beginning was Ooooooooooooh.
And then came Uuhhhhhhhmmmmmmmmm. And so there were Ooooollllllllllllooh and Uuhhhhhhhmmmmmmmmm.
And after some time, Ooooollllllllllllooh and Uuhhhhhhhmmmmmmmmm made Ohhhmmmmm.
And they came together and throats and lips formed around them. And so there were Ooooollllllllllllooh and Uuhhhhhhhmmmmmmmmm and Ohhhmmmmm and throats and lips and then the lips made Ewwwwwwwwwwww and the throats made Aaaaaaaahhhhhhh and then tongues formed around the Aaaaaaaahhhhhhh and soon palates grew above them and so there were Ooooollllllllllllooh and Uuhhhhhhhmmmmmmmmm and Ohhhmmmmm and Ewwwwwwwwwwww and Aaaaaaaahhhhhhhhh and throats and lips and tongues and palates and then came Lllllllllllllllllllllllllllllll and Mooooo.
And they made more sounds, and gradually other parts formed around those, too, and this is how the world was made.
And after a while the parts came together—they were held together by the Ooooollllllllllllooh and Uuhhhhhhhmmmmmmmmm and Ohhhmmmmm and Ewww-
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The spaces — and as they moved together they began to make more sounds. And these huddles of parts and sounds learned that if they were to keep moving, they needed to make a common space to move in. And to do that they began to send sounds towards each other. And they found that if they did that, then those sounds made more sounds, and then they began to grow new parts around those new sounds.

And after a time, there were thumbs and lungs and knees and eyebrows.

(Some were born without thumbs, and these were the silent ones who sang no language and made no music, and in the same moment that they came into being, they hushed back into nothingness again.)

They lived together in a space made by the sounds, and that space flowed into them and they breathed it back out again and it was that way for a while. But one day, one of them reached out his arm and down through the bones and the sinews to the tips of his fingers he sent one of the sounds. Meeeeeeeee, he shot through his veins and out his fingernails and into the space before him, and in doing so he changed that space. Once he realized what he had done, he did it again, and again, as sounds flowed from his toes and out his nostrils and through his throat, his lips, his mouth. (When he sent them out from his mouth he could stop them and chew them and tongue them and he liked that, so he kept doing that over and over.) Others saw him, and heard him, and gradually tried to do it themselves. And they learned how the different sounds tasted, and they stirred the sounds together in their mouths — a kind of soundcooking — to make new tastes and they blew them at one another and tasted each other’s sounds and they were nourished. And they came to believe that they had harnessed the sounds, and taken control of the spaces, and they cooked words together or ate them raw and they built structures out of their sounds and moved through them and continued to trust in their power as chefs and as architects and they forgot where their flesh came from, forgot that the sounds had made their lips, that their throats and bellies had
formed around the sounds, and they forgot themselves. And so they didn’t understand when the Lllllllaaaaaaa left, and the Ohhhmmmmmmmm stopped coming, and the Ewwwwwwwww and the Aaaaaaaahhhhhhh grew tasteless, and then there was no more to chew, and the structures dissolved, and as the sounds went silent, one by one the parts that they sustained began to disappear — the knees, and the nostrils, and the eyelids, and the lips, and the tongues, and the rest. As the last one reached his arm out again for the last time, he tried to scratch a Meeeereeeeee into the dust as his fingernails crumbled and his skin dried and powdered away and all he was were eyes and bones until those crumbled, too. And it made no sound, and the rest was silence.