Agony

Stephen Sondheim

Did I abuse her or show her disdain
Why does she run from me
If I should lose her how shall I regain
The heart she has won from me
Agony, beyond power of speech
When the one thing you want
Is the only thing out of your reachHigh in her tower she sits by the hour
Maintaining her hair
Blithe and becoming and frequently humming
A light-hearted air
Ah
Agony, far more painful than yours
When you know she would go with you
If there only were doors
Agony, all the torture they teach
What's as intruiging or half so fatiguing
As what's out of reachAm I not sensitive, clever
Well-mannered, considerate
Passionate, charming
As kind as I'm handsome
And heir to a throne?
You are everything maidens could wish for
Then why no
Do I know?
The girl must be mad
You know nothing of madness
'Til you're climbing her hair
And you see her up there as you're nearing her
And all the while hearing her
Ah
Agony, misery, though it's different for each
Always ten steps behind, always ten steps below
And she's just out of reach
Agony, that can cut like a knife
I must have her to wifeHigh in a tower like yours was but higher
A beauty asleep
All 'round the tower a thicket of briar
A hundred feet deep
Agony, no frustration more keen

When the one thing you want
Is a thing that you've not even seenI've found a casket entirely of glass
No, it's unbreakable
Inside, don't ask it, a maiden alas
Just as unwakeable
What unmistakeable
Agony, is the way always hard
She has skin white as snow
Did you learn her name, no
There's a dwarf standing guard
Agony such that princes must weep
Always in thrall 'most to anything almost
Or something asleepIf it were not for the thicket
A thicket's no trick, is it thick
It's the thickest
The quickest is pick it apart with a stick
Yes but even one prick, it's my thing about blood
Well it's sick
It's no sicker than your thing about dwarfs
Dwarves
Dwarfs
Dwarves are very upsetting
Not forgetting
The task's unachievable, mountains unscalable
If it's conceivable but unavailable
Ah
Agony, misery, woe not to know what you miss
While they lie there for years
And you cry on their biers
What unbearable bliss
Agony that can cut like a knife
Ah well, back to my wife

Songwriters
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