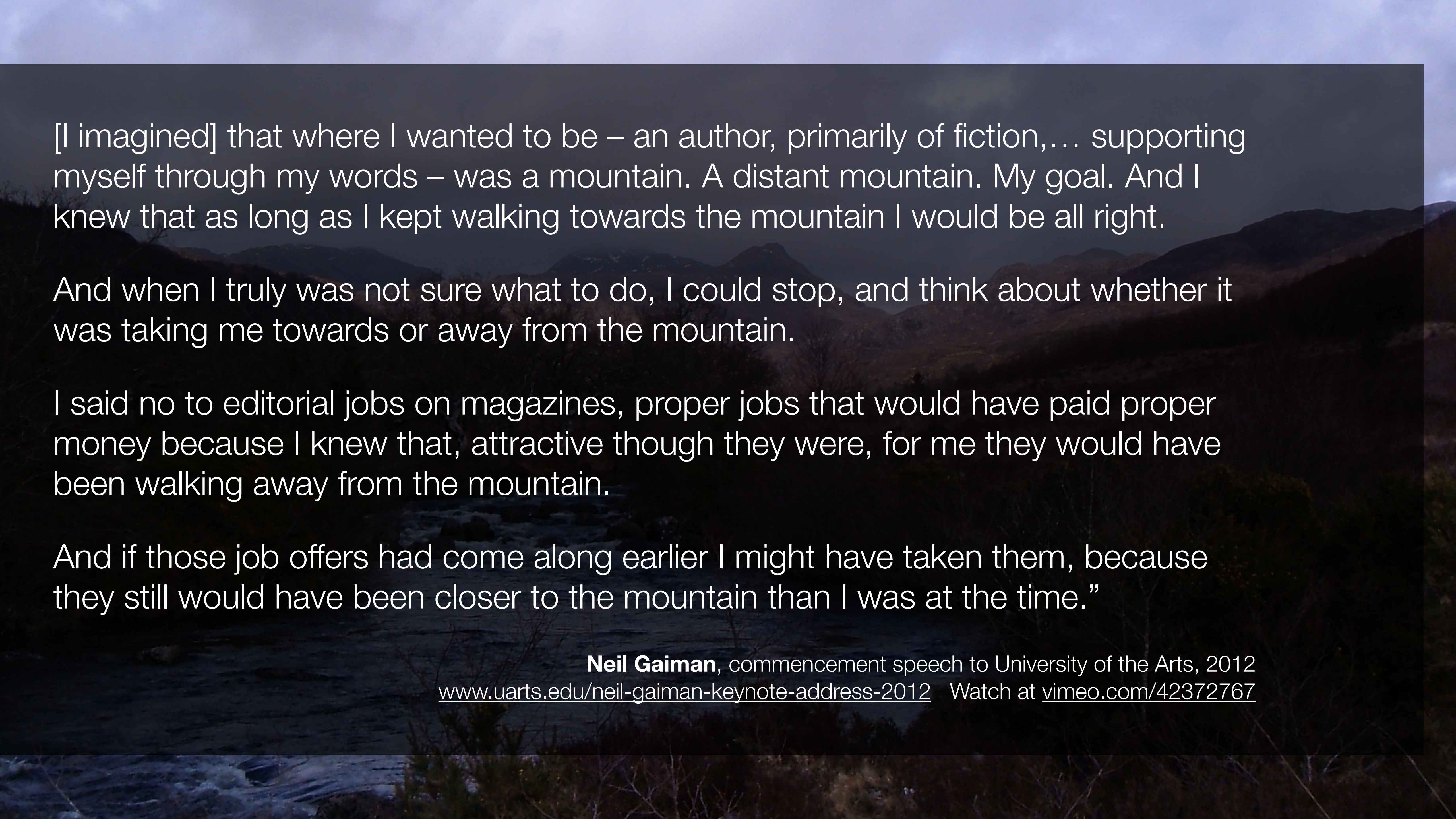




**Does it get you closer  
to the mountain?**



The background of the slide is a dark, atmospheric landscape. It features a river or stream in the foreground, with water reflecting the light. In the background, there are rolling hills and mountains under a cloudy sky. The overall tone is moody and contemplative.

[I imagined] that where I wanted to be – an author, primarily of fiction,... supporting myself through my words – was a mountain. A distant mountain. My goal. And I knew that as long as I kept walking towards the mountain I would be all right.

And when I truly was not sure what to do, I could stop, and think about whether it was taking me towards or away from the mountain.

I said no to editorial jobs on magazines, proper jobs that would have paid proper money because I knew that, attractive though they were, for me they would have been walking away from the mountain.

And if those job offers had come along earlier I might have taken them, because they still would have been closer to the mountain than I was at the time.”

**Neil Gaiman**, commencement speech to University of the Arts, 2012  
[www.uarts.edu/neil-gaiman-keynote-address-2012](http://www.uarts.edu/neil-gaiman-keynote-address-2012) Watch at [vimeo.com/42372767](https://vimeo.com/42372767)