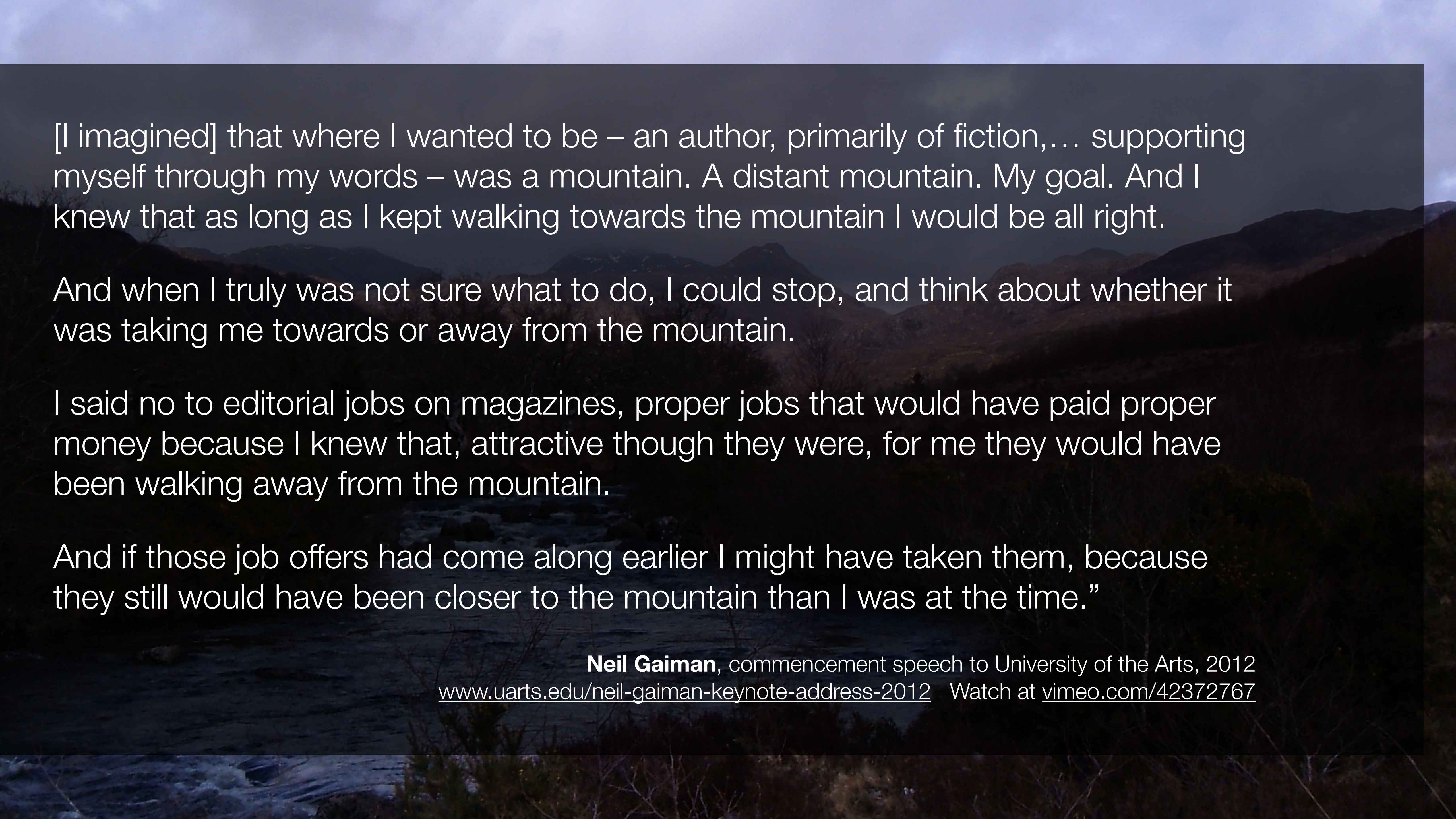




**Does it get you closer
to the mountain?**

The background of the slide is a dark, atmospheric landscape. It features a river or stream in the foreground, with its surface reflecting the light from the sky. In the background, there are rolling hills and mountains, some of which are covered in snow or light-colored vegetation. The sky is a deep blue or purple, suggesting a twilight or dawn setting. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

[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 Watch at vimeo.com/42372767