Questions:

1. What is your hometown? My hometown is Long Beach, California. Actually Cal Heights I consider my hometown but we moved around a lot.
2. If you could move to another city, would you? Yes
3. If so, what city? The only city I would consider moving to is New York. Manhattan. We have been here less than two years. I fell in love with Memphis to the point where I feel that I have such a purpose here, that I wouldn’t move. I would be happy having dual residency.
4. What neighborhood do you live in? Central Gardens
5. How long have you lived in Memphis? Less than two years
6. How would you describe the City of Memphis in three words? Oh my gosh, three adjectives. It is tough to pick three. I would say, first of all, diverse, which I think would surprise a lot of people who aren’t from here. Complex. And Soulful.
7. What were your first impressions of Memphis? My first impression was based on a few visits here. My first impression had everything to do with the Poplar corridor which is to say that I didn’t see anything unique. Memphis seemed like so many other cities I had seen that seemed stuck in the city planning development that were stuck in the 60s and 70s. With a lot of commercial signage, chain stores and restaurants, and I didn’t see everything about Memphis that I was going to see and learn. But it didn’t talk long for me to discover “Memphis”, the soulful, complex part of it. Fell in love with it. Fell in love with all the complexities, fell in love with the controversies, fell in love with the dark history, fell in love with what Memphis could be, with maybe wants to be, so maybe my first impressions were all over the place. From learning what East Memphis was all about, what Germantown was all about, compared to downtown Memphis with South Main and Midtown, which I completely fell in love with and very much felt at home in. That was the thing that surprised me the most. Especially Midtown. That I felt “at home.” Growing up in California as I did, I never felt like I was “at home.”
8. What is your current impression of Memphis? My current impression, I still have that feeling of being “at home”, and I have the feeling that as much as I have explored already, I feel like the onion where I have only peeled the first few layers and I keep getting to meatier and meatier stuff when it comes to understanding the mentality of Memphis, the history of Memphis . And it was the funniest thing today during yoga, I had this vision, because I have been exploring the history of Memphis so much that I keep thinking about what I once heard someone say that “any town that grew up on the cotton industry, is cursed, because of the slave trade.” I thought that is interesting. And then I thought that maybe Memphis has two curses. The cotton trade and also built on Indian ground; Chickasaw bluffs. I thought I wonder if there is more to that. Everyone I talk to talks about ghosts. And I wonder if there is more to it than just the cotton trade. So impression is that I have peeled away a few layers of the onion and there are a lot of layers still to peel away.
9. Do you feel Memphis has improved while you have lived here? I think so. It seemed to be improving when I got here. And now I have seen a little wave, little waves up and down. It seems that there are more battles to fight now than when I got here but that could be because I am just more aware of them. And when I say there are more battles to fight it is because when I first got here, it was all about the Greensward. But now it is the MLGW building, the southern rail yard, the Ellis building downtown, a neighborhood in Frayser, and you could go on and on. But I think it has continued to go on the upswing.
10. What is your funniest story about living in Memphis? I think the funniest, most interesting story, is when we were first living in the Kimbrough. We lived in the Kimbrough for a little over a year. So Kimbrough Towers right on Union. And our apartment was right on top of Union. And from where we were, we could see people coming and going to the liquor store downstairs. And I would see all kinds of characters. I would see mentally ill people walking down the street talking to themselves, I would see people pushing grocery carts, I would see limousines pulling up at 10:45 before the liquor store closed. One night we woke up to a “lady of the evening” arguing with a pimp. We have heard gunshots from up there. I think that is the most interesting, to see every walk of life when it comes to Midtown Memphis , to see it all right there in front of you like a show on a daily basis. And also to learn about Union Avenue and how messed up it is as far as traffic goes. And to see a traffic accident just about every day.
11. If you could change something about Memphis, what would it be?

My first thought was something about a hidden racism.  But I keep thinking about this and what I'd change would be that thing that I can't quite put my finger on, that thing that is the motivation behind some of the nonsensical issues that pop up in this town, things that leave most of us shaking our heads, like the Greensward issue.  Maybe it's racism, maybe it's a good ol' boy mentality, maybe it's old, big money, or maybe it's an agenda only a handful of people know. I haven't figured out what it is yet, but whatever it is, I'd change that.

1. This web site only captures a snapshot in time. What would you like someone twenty years from now who reads this to know about you? I think that “he came to Memphis as an outside but immediately wanted to do something important for Memphis.” I hope that that happens. I hope that twenty years from now we can say that “he did do something important for Memphis.” And as soon as possible. I turned 50 this year and I feel that I don’t have a lot of time. We can add that, that coming here I feel like I have been gifted with a second life.
2. What is your favorite thing about Memphis? My favorite thing about Memphis is, that is a hard one. First of all, it is a long list. You know, I have to say, it has to be the people. The history of this town is just amazing and not enough of the rest of the world knows how much history is here. And for better or worse, the people make this town.