IN-CLASS INTRODUCTION

This lesson is designed to provide students with a one-class introduction to the book. The lesson can be used to start off a class reading of the text, or to encourage them to read it independently.

As a recipient of One Book resources, the Free Library requires that you devote one class period to introducing *The Yellow Birds* to students, either using this lesson or your own plan.

**Introduction**

Note: This book has graphic violent content, as well as profanity in the dialogue. Teachers may want to address this before reading so that students know what to expect.

1. Distribute books and have students turn to the page with the epigrams. Read the epigrams aloud (with a discussion about profanity in the text beforehand, if necessary.)
   - For the first quote, discuss what a military cadence is.
   - For the second quote, spend time breaking down the meaning until all students understand, either in pairs, small groups, or with the whole class. Have them guess the era that Thomas Browne is from (17th Century England.) Do they agree with what the quote is saying?
   - Discuss: what is the purpose of each of these quotes? And why have the two of them next to each other? Why would the author want this kind of *juxtaposition* at the start of his book? What might the main themes of the book be?

2. Introduce the class to the author, Kevin Powers. Have them read the short story on the back of the book, and show them this photograph (which features his military tattoos.)
3. As a class, read the first 2+ pages of the book, up through the first paragraph on page 5 (“We waited.”) If possible, you can start by playing them this video of the author reading the first page himself: http://www.pbs.org/newshour/art/blog/2012/10/conversation-kevin-powers-author-of-the-yellow-birds.html

4. Discuss: where are we? Using the map provided below or other materials show students the geography of Iraq. (See if anybody picks up on the fact that Powers was a gunner in Tal Afar, and the setting of the first chapter of the book is Al Tafar. Tal Afar is just north of Al Mawsil in the northern end of Iraq.)

5. Poll students to see what they know about the Iraq wars. Collect relevant information on the board.
6. If time permits, have students explore this NY Times Timeline on the Internet: 
   http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2008/03/18/world/middleeast/20080319 IRAQWAR_TIMELINE.html?#tab1
   It introduces viewers to the major events from each year, complete with photos and links to articles.

7. Give students time to continue reading the chapter on their own.