

NEIL LEIFER: *BALLET IN THE DIRT*

In an era of auctioned asterisked baseballs, revoked Olympic medals, taunting penalties and managers enrolled in sensitivity-training courses, Neil Leifer's photography is the proverbial breath of fresh air that purists have been gasping for. In *Ballet in the Dirt: The Golden Age of Baseball*, released this winter by Taschen, Leifer's Telephoto action shots and fly-on-the-dugout-wall portraits are truly diamonds in the rough. With pithy pull quotes by everyone from Leo "The Lip" Durocher ("Nice guys finish last") to Humphrey Bogart ("A hot dog at the ballgame beats a steak at The Ritz"), stitched throughout and a comprehensive opening essay by Ron Shelton, skip the sunflower seeds — flipping these pages is the ideal way to pass the time.

— James Hughes

