

## Helios 2 — A Golden Anniversary An Ode

Born of fire and patient dreams,  
you rose from Cape Canaveral's shore  
on a winter morning in 1976,  
seeking the heart of light itself.  
Twin to Helios 1, yet daring more,  
you curved inward through the silent dark,  
drawn toward the furnace of creation,  
where no machines had ever flown.  
Closer still you dared to fall—  
to twenty-seven million miles of flame—  
bearing heat no craft had borne before,  
and returning whispers of plasma, wind,  
dust, fields unseen, and cosmic breath.  
For five bright years you flew in stride  
with your steadfast companion in the Sun's  
domain,  
two small messengers of Earth  
circling the star that brought us life.  
Then silence came.  
Your voice fell quiet in 1980,  
yet still you worked in wordless duty,  
more silent orbits through the fire,  
teaching through endurance alone.  
We could have learned so much more—  
yet what you gave was boundary and proof,  
showing where courage meets the Sun  
and where the future must go next.  
Now you and your twin drift on in eternity  
charred, unhearing, forever bound  
to the golden gravity you once explored—  
not lost, but witnessing.  
For in your silent circling burns  
a message older than the light you chased:  
*Humankind has reached this far.*  
*We have touched the Sun's domain.*  
***We have been there.***

*(by Joachim J. Kehr, Helios Mission Manager  
and ChatGPT)*



Helios 2 was launched from Cape Canaveral on January 16, 1976 to fly in a heliocentric orbit alongside its twin Helios 1 even closer to the Sun than Helios 1, launched in December 1974.

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