

## Red Roadster Rides Outer Space

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On Tuesday, SpaceX launched one of the largest rockets ever, the Falcon Heavy. Because it is still experimental, it didn't carry up an expensive satellite. Too early for that. Instead, it has sent up a Tesla Roadster.

And it's not aiming for orbit . . . around Earth.

It's aiming for, well, "a precessing Earth-Mars elliptical orbit around the sun."



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government subsidies.*

All the while playing the late David Bowie's "Space Oddity."

This is all very bizarre, of course. But SpaceX is headed by Elon Musk, who is one of those daring people who do daring things. The very fact that he kept finding funding (no small amount of it from taxpayers, sadly) for Tesla

Motors (which he also founded), while failing to make a profit, is a tribute to . . . something.

Sending Musk's *personal* car into space — to circuit Sol for a billion years — is, the visionary says, at least not *boring*. (Musk, perhaps not coincidentally for that word choice, also founded the Boring Company.) The Roadster, "piloted" by a dummy "Starman," is an upgrade with flair.

But who is he playing to? The masses of auto buffs? Stargazers? Science fiction fans?\*

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So, think of what's going into orbit as just another part of the skyrocketing — *spacerocketing* — federal debt.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.

\* *The odd payload choice might make sense in sci-fi context, for, in the early days of science fiction, one idea often mentioned was to literally send a bomb to the Moon: an explosion, after all, could be seen, in early Space Age days, with old technology right here from Planet Earth surface. This was the case in the boys' book **The Rocket's Shadow** as imagined in 1947.*